

## **Chapter-IV**

# **SECTS AND SUB-SECTS OF INDIAN MUSLIMS**

### **Introduction**

In previous chapter, we can see the conditions of the Arabia during the time of the existence of Islam. And slowly Islam gained popularity due to its basic principle i.e., equality not only in Arabs, but also in the world. Islam was united to many different sects of the different religion once after converting to this religion and called as 'Ummat e-Muhammadi', mean the followers of the true path of Allah shown by Prophet Muhammed (S.A.S). And also called the Millat means 'Single Community'. Where there is no difference between white and black, Rich and poor, men and women superiority and inferiority, all are equal in the eyes of Almighty Allah. Due to the simplicity of this religion, it spreads all over the world. And majority of the Indian people accepted Islam as their religion after the preaching and spreading of Islam in India.

India is our country, where the different race groups and the followers of different religions live together in one common land. This is the country of different religion, knowledge, culture and race. This is the most basic and precious peculiarity of our country. We don't see such other examples as India. We can see the impacts of this mixed culture on each other. In the field of religion also, we can notice the impacts of Hindu culture on Muslim culture in India.

As far India is concerned, the work of propagation of Islam was undertaken in very high manner, but it is pity to say that there is no such either any institution or organization or neither any personal efforts for those converted Muslims to guide the true Islamic laws, Islamic custom, above all the Islamic 'Adab-E-Zindagi' means etiquettes of day to day life. Islam is a new religion for those converted Indian Muslims, usually they convert their religion as Muslim, but actually they cannot modify themselves with accordance to the Islamic Society.

This is the case not only seen in India, but also in many other countries.

So a person cannot forecast the customs of their own society and strongly connect the customs of regional society. Many of them followed even after the conversion. The Indian Muslims were followed the customs of regional society frequently in their day to day life.

The another major impact of the Indian Society on Muslim Society is the caste system. Islam rose with the aims to destroy all the evils of the cast system, to unite all the disunite sects in only one single rope, and to destroy the discrimination between each other cast, sects and religions also.

But now a days due to the exploitation of the some labelised Muslim religious leaders, (Ulemas) and the selfish people, who only wanted to maintain their dignity and power among the innocent people. And also the Muslim community itself much responsible for

the disunity of one united community and the result of that is present in front of all the people.

The Ummah of Prophet Mohammed (S.A.S) splits into the number of sects. The major sect of Islam as conclude after studying many books is:

1. Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat
2. Non-Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat.

Sect means in Urdu, split, section. Divide, piece, difference, etc., Here sect is Islam means the differences of believes in basic believes of Islam. We can divide the basic believes of Islam as follows:-

1. Tawhid: Means unity in the unit of god. Islam consists of 'submission and obedience to Allah'. He is only all in one i.e., Creator, Sustainer, Sovereign.
2. Prophethood: Muhammed (S.A.S) is the last Prophet in Islam. Islam stands for the complete faith in the teachings of the prophet and obedience to his way of life. One who ignores the medium of the prophet and claims to follow God directly is not a 'Muslim.'
3. Akhirat means the last and the final day of Judgement i.e., also called as Qiyamats and Hashr (Resurrection). That the entire record of every man and women, of all their doings and mistakes, will be presented before God for final judgement, one who excels in goodness in goodness will be rewarded: one whose evils and wrongs outweigh his good deeds will be punished.

And also the major pillars of Islam or acts of worship like Namaz, Zakat and Haj should be followed by a true Muslim along

with the other major believes like, belief in God's Angels, faith in the revealed books of God and follow the Shariah (the Islamic Law) in day to day life.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

If any person or group rejects the above believes or the any sections of believes, means that group becomes a different sect of Islam i.e., Non Ahle Sunnat.

If anybody fully believes in all the above mentioned beliefs of Islam, those were called as a Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat. i.e., the true follower of Islam.

### **Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat**

Sunnat means all the actions and practices which were performed by Prohphet Mohammed. Either performing the Namaz (way of Namaz) way of speech, way of dealing, way of eating, way of sleeping, respect to all the elders and loved all the childrens, Adab-E-Zindagi, in general. The way of obedience towards God (pious) (Piety), Politness, kindness, generosity, truthfulness, lawful, justice to each and everything patience, hardworking. Honesty, sincerity, loyalty, forgiveness, the way of preaching of Islam, above all humanity in special way.

Jamat: The work of propagation of Islam was handed over to the Sahaba-E-Karam (Companions) and at the time of Hajjatul-wida (Last visit of Mohammed (S.A.S) at the time of Hajji) himself directed to all the companions to spread Islam to those people who were not present. Many Sahaba-E-Karam presents at the time of last Haj and this group was called as Jammat. Many of Sahaba-E (Companion of Prophet

(S.A.S) spreads all over the world for the purpose of spreading of Islam. later the work is handed over to the Jamat of Tabaeen, the trained persons and also the Khulfai-Rashadeen (four caliphs). And all the group of the companions of Prophet (S.A.S). Tabaeen, the trained persons and Kulfai Rashadeen together is called as Jamaat (Association).

At present those who followed all the actions and practices (Sunnatien) of Prophet Muhamad (S.A.S) and the Basic believes of Islam along with the Shariah (Islamic laws) without any discrimination and slightest changes, come under the Ahle Sunnat wal Jamat group or sect. Other than this, if any person or group changed anything slightly or added just any word apart from this written believes and Sunnatien and Shariah come under the sect at Non Ahle Sunnat wal Jamat.

Those are the important Ahadith (Ahadis) means (farman) regarding the Sects.<sup>4</sup>

1. In this Hadith the Prophet (S.A.S.) is reported to have said “My community (ummahj) will split into seventy three sects.”
2. Prophet (S.A.S) said “My Ummah (Community) will be fragmented in to 73 Seventy three, Sects and all of them will be in Hell fire except one sect.” The companion asked Allah’s messenger, which group that would be? where upon, He (S.A.S) replied “It is the one to which, (S.A.S) and my companions belongs”.<sup>5,6</sup>

If we start searching in accordance to these Ahadith only, we come across too many of sects in Islam. Here I want to clarify which

sect belongs to Islam and which one is separated from the circle of Islam, by showing the chart.

According to the book, Ansabul-khulafa of Ibene-Hazam. There are only 7 major sects. Those 7 sects were as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the Sects	No. of Sects
1	Motazala	20
2	Shia	22
3	Kharjia	20
4	Marjia	5
5	Bukhariya	3
6	Mushaba	1
7	Ahle Sunnat Jamat	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

The names and the founders of the sects are discussed in Non Ahle Sunnat wal Jamat the major sect of Islam, except the Ahle Sunnat wal Jamat. This Sect is further divided into many sects and sub-sects.

### 1. Non-Ahle-Sunnat-Wal Jamat

The first major split in Islam is 'Non Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat. All the sects like 1) Matzala, 2) Shia, 3) Kharjia, 4) Marjia, 5) Bukhar, 6) Jabriya, 7) Mushaba, 8) Rafizi, 9) Khaje, 10) Khodeiyani, etc., come under this sect.

All the sects were not the followers of 3 basic believes of Islam i.e., 1) Tawahid, 2) Risalat, 3) Akhirat. And also they don't follow the principles of Islam correctly and they modified the principles of Islam according to their own will and wish.

Here I want to narrate briefly about all the sects and sub-sects and the founders of the sects.

According to the book Amal-w-Nahal of Ibne Hazam, only 5 major sects in Islam and all the other sects were the sub-sects of the 5 major sects. Those five sects were as follows:

- 1. Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat
- 2. Motazala
- 3. Shia
- 4. Marjia
- 5. Kharjia.<sup>7</sup>

So, in the book ‘Mazahihnl Islam’ by:

The Sect were classified as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the Sects	No. of Sects
1	Motazala	20
2	Shia	22
3	Kharjia	20
4	Marjia	5
5	Bukhariya	3
6	Jibriya	1
7	Mushaba	1
8	Ahle-Sunnat	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

**1. Motzala**

This sect was far away from the truth of Islam. The true believers in principles of Islam. The believers of this Sect are totally different from Islamic believers. And secondly, the group was

separated from the great Saint 'Khwaja Hasan Basard.' So they were called as Matazala meaning to be separate from truth.

There were 20 sects in this sect. They were as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the Sects	Founders
1	Wasiliya	Abi Huzaifa Wasil bin Ata
2	Umariyaa	Umra-bin-ubaid
3	Huzaliya	Abu Huzail HamdanBin Huzail
4	Nazzamiya	Ibrahimbin sayyar Nazam
5	Iswariya	Abu Ali Umro Bin Qaid Iswari
6	Iskafiya	Abu Jafar Iskafi
7	Jafariya	Jaffer
8	Zababiya	Zabiya
9	Zamiya	Zami
10	Umawiya	Umar
11	Cihamamiya	Rabiya
12	Razamiya	Razam Bin Sahique
13	Gharakhariya or Shalma Ghaniya	Mohd. Bin Ali Shalm Ghani
14	Ishaquiya	Abdullah Bin Mawiya
15	Nasiriya	Nasir
16	Alwiya	Ali
17	Muqniya	Hukam Bin Hasham
18	Rawwindiya	Harab Bin Rawind
19	Bislamiya	Ghaliya

**Kharjia:**

They don't accept the 'Hazat Ali' as Imam. They refused the orders of Abu Moosa Ashari and Umra Bin Aas, as 'Hakim' or Governor by 'Hazarat Ali'. So they were called as Kharjia. So, the group was rejected from the Circle of Islam.



There were 20 sects of Kharjia. The name of the founders of the some sects were still unknown.

Sl. No.	Name of the Sects	Founders
1	Yamama	Najdo Bin Amir
2	Arzaqula	Arzaque
3	Rodloua	Sjaraf Bin Fud
4	Atwaiya	Aliya Bin Acwad
5	Ajarda	Abdul Rehman Bin Ajred
6	Saltiya	Usman Bin Saltiya
7	Hazmia	
8	Mabomia	
9	Majhooliya	
10	Bashriya	Bashar
11	Mazalariya	Maruf Mazdar
12	Hashshamiya	Hasham Bin Umar
13	Hadbiya	Peerofazal Hadasi
14	Swathiya	Swalihi
15	Samamiya	Somoma
16	Khiyatiya	Umar Khiyat
17	Jahaziya	Imran Jahiz
18	Kaabiya	Abdul Qasmi Kaabi
19	Jabaiya	Mohd. Bin Abdul Wahab Jabai
20	Bahashamiya	Abu Hashim Abdul Salam

### **Shia**

The another major sect of Islam, who were the followers of "Hazarat Ali". The son-in-law of Prophet Muhammed (S.A.S). The meaning of the word Shia is, the companion or friend.

The basic believe of this sect is the Prophethood (Risalat) was transferred to Hazart Ali, after the death of Prophet Mohammed

(S.A.S). They believed that the Prophethood still continued through Hazarat Ali.

There are 22 Sects in Shia. Those were as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the Sects	Founders
1	Sabaiya	Abdullah Saba
2	Kamiliya	Abu Kamil
3	Mughairiya	Mughairabin Sqeed
4	Bananiya	Banan Bin Samat
5	Janaliya	Abdullah Bin Jaffar Zul Janahain
6	Monsooriya	Abu Mansoor
7	Khatabiya	Abdul Khitab
8	Gurabiya	Ghurab Ghaeen
9	Haltoba	
10	Akhmiya	
11	Zafariya	
12	Abaziya	
13	Nibithasiya	Abi Nibhatas
14	Memunia	Shaikh Babya
15	Khalifiya	
16	Shamitiya	
17	Burkhia	
18	Jansbiya	
19	Halagiya	Shaikh Babya
20	Suliamania Sulicma	

### **Marjia**

This group of people rejects the attributes of God:

1. Jahima
2. Qdriya
3. Zarrariya
4. Kullabia

5. Majheola

**Bukharia**

1. Suliamamiya

2. Batriya

3. Qaidiya

4. Jibriya - 1

5. Mushaba.<sup>8</sup>

In another book the 73 Sects of Islam were classified as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the Sects	No. of Sects
1	Ahle Sunnat	1
2	Kharji	15
3	Motazala	6
4	Marjia	12
5	Shia	32
6	Jahimid	1
7	Nijaria	1
8	Zavariya	1
9	Kulabiya	1
10	Mushtaba	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

All the 73 sects depends on only 10 major groups. And according to the Hadith of Mohammed (S.A.S.) The Sect of Ahle Sunnat will only attain Nijat (salvation Moksha) as in Hinduism among all the other 73 sects.

**Ahle-Sunnat-Wal-Jamat**

The followers of this Jamat strongly believes in Emal (Karma), because all the deeds of person depends upon his good or bad deeds.

A person can get heaven, performing good deeds' and those who are not performing any good deeds, and not following the true path, which is shown by Allah and his Prophet go to Hell.

### **Kharjia**

All the groups of this sect believes Hazart Ali, the Khalipha, was a Prophet. So, they excluded from the sect of Ahle Sunnat-w-Jamat. They didn't followed the Khilafat of all the Khalifas. The name of the sects and the name of the founders were as follows:

Sl. No.	Sect	Founder	Believe
1	Najadat	Najad Bin Anur	They don't follow any Imam and knowing Quran is sufficient instead of following.
2	Azariqua	Nafe-bin-Azaraque	Every Sinner will become Idolatry a Shirq
3	Fideliya	Abne-litrek	
4	Atmiya	Atiya Bin aswad	
5	Ajarda	Abdullah Bin Ajra	All the three sects are also called as Memonia. Followers of these groups believed that the Nikah is Jaiz. (lawful) with grand daughter (means daughter of son, daughter of daughters), nice, etc.
6	Jariya		
7	Maloomiya		Of anybody not knowing the Allah with their other names is (Jahil).
8	Majhooliya		Believes of this sect is simply opposite from above sects.
9	Saltiya	Usman bin Saltiya	They believed that a person (male) cannot become Muslim until he does not come to the age of maturity and willingly should accept Islam than only he becomes a true Muslim
10	Akhansiya	Akhnas	Don't believe in Hell and Heaven and the last Prophet (S.A.S)
11	Zafariya		
12	Abasiya		

13	Bansiya		
14	Sjaraljoua		
15	Bidatiya		

**MATAZALA**

The sect of this people are called as Matazala, because they separated themselves from Islamic principles. And, the another reason was, that the leader of this sect Wasin Bin Ata was degraded or removed from the Assembly Meeting of Khawaja Hasan b Asra. In another manner the meaning of this word is to be removed to be displaced, degraded from fact or true, or reality.

The total number of sects is 6. They were as follows:

Sl. No.	Sect	Founder	Believe
1	Huzliya	Abu Huzail	The people of this sect believe that God can see with His eyes, and hear with his ears. They don't even believe in Hell and Heaven.
2	Nizamiya	Miya Nizam	The people of this sect believes that no body has seen the Prophet Mohammed (S.A.S.) with his eyes. And they don't believed in the Unity of Muslim Ummah (Community). Namaz was not compulsory. And they compare Hazarath Ali and Hazarat Umar (Khalifas) as Yusuf Bin Hajjaj. This is the first Sect who called the Sect of Ahle Sunnat or (Ahle Qilda) is non Muslim. They believed that snakes, Dogs, Pigs also live in Heaven.
3	Muammariya	Muammar	Allah is not Almighty, nor a sustainer and sovereign of this Universe in some conditions.
4	Jabaiya	Jabai	Good work, as accordance to the will and wish of a person. God himself made pregnant to the all ladies of this world because they can produce good issues (Children).
5	Bhashmia	Abi Hashim	The Founder of this Sect is the son of the previous sect that is Jabaiya. So, the believers were not so much different from Jabaiya Sect.
6	Kaabiya	Abi Qasim Kaabi	God cannot see or hear any thing. And the Holy Quran is also a creature.

## MARJIA

Sl. No.	Sect	Founder	Believe
1	Jahmiya	Jaham Bin Sugwan	Quran is also one of the creature of God. They don't believed in the last day of Judgement i.e., Hashr.
2	Salhiya	Husian Swathi	Faith is the worship.
3	Uimisoua	Uimis Birru	With God. To know God with Polity, if any follower doesn't follow the two believes means he will be non-believer.
4	Shamriya	Abi Shamar	Knowing the some attributes of God. To be politice in front of God. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• God is alone - this should accept by a person with his mouth only.</li></ul>
5	Yunania	Yunan	They believed in God as well as the Messenger of God. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All the admissible work should do with the intelligence of a man only.</li></ul>
6	Gailaniya	Gilan	The believes of this sect is similar with the Shamriya sects.
7	Shabibiya	Shabib	In the attributes of God. They don't compare the God with the physical body of a man.
8	Hanfiya	Abu Hanifa Namaan Bin sabit	They follow one book of Barhoot, a great writer of this time. The believes of this sect is totally different from the Hanfi school of thoughts.
9	Muaziya	Muaz Wasi	A person who is immoral, sinful, disobedient is nor a friend of God nor a enemy of God.
10	Manosiya	Maresi	A person can bow down (Sajda) to the Sun.
11	Karamiya	Abi Abdullah Bin Karam	Reciting the Kalimah of Shahadat is sufficient for person instead of faith or trustworthiness

## SHIA

Shia Sect is called by some different names also like some sects were called as Rafzi. Some were Ghaliya and some were Tayariya. They were called Shia because they followed Imam Hazarat Ali and gave much important to Hazarat Ali from other Khalifas.

Rafzi: they don't accept the Khilafat of Hazarat Abu Baker and Hazarat Umar, the Khalifas and they compared Imam Hazarat Ali as greater than Imam Hazarat Usman.

Qatiya: A group which is separated from the death of Moosa Bin Jaffer.

Ghaliya: They believed Hazarat Ali as God. Following were the scholars who wrote about the believes of this sect. 1) Hasham Bin Hakam, 2) Ali Bin Mansoor, 3) Husain Bin Sayeed, 4) Fazal Bin Shazan, 5) Ibne Rawindi.

Rafzi sects were classified as follows.

<b>Ghaliya 13 Sub-sects</b>	<b>Zaidiya 6 Sub-sects</b>	<b>Rafaza 14 Sub-sects</b>
1. Nabaniya	1. Jaoodiya	1. Khateeya
2. Tayariya	2. Sulismaniya	2. Kesania
3. Mansoonya	3. Tibriya	3. Kreyebia
4. Mughairiya	4. Naeemiya	4. Umeriya
5. Khatabiya	5. Yaqoobiya	5. Muthammadiya
6. Muammariya	6. Tanasiquiya	6. Husinniya
7. Bazliya		7. Nadsiya
8. Mafsaliya		8. Ismailiya
9. Mutnasikha		9. Kharamziya
10. Shariya		10. Mubarakiya
11. Sabaiya		11. Shamariya
12. Sabaoua		12. Umariya
13. Mafuziya		13. Mahzoonya
		14. Mosaya

The founder of the Rafzi Sect was Said Bin Ali.

### **Jahimiya**

The founder of this sect is 'Jaham Bin Safwan. Believe God is also one thing - Hell and Heaven is not present.

### **Nijariya**

The founder of this Sect is Hussain Ibne Mohammed Aligar.

Belief: they refused the attributes of God. Quran is also a creature.

### **Zarariya**

The Founder of this sect is called by name Zarrar Bin Umar.

### **Kulabiya**

Abudullah Bin Kulab was the founder of this sect.

Believes: Not believing in the attributes of God. There are no Alphabets in Quran.

### **Mushtaba**

1. Hashamiya
2. Muqataliya
3. Wasmiya

Believes: Physical presence of God, they follow the believes of Rafazi and Kulabia.<sup>9</sup>

### **Shia**

In another book, by name 'Husain'. (The Saviour of Islam.' By S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, New Delhi) speaks about the sect of Shia Community. According to this book, there were only 12 sects and all knowing about Creator, Lord of the Universe, with His Infinite Knowledge. Knows about the utter darkness which would shroud the



human world, and had also determined the paraces for it, in the mission of the Last of His Apostle's about whom Jesus had declared that the 'Comfortor who would come after him will abide for ever Joh. 14:16.

As all the previously revealed scriptures had been either corrupted or were made extinct, the Almighty Lord willed that the Holy Quran, His Final word, shall be preserved for ever, beyond the reach of any satanic hands, with any questionable intention to meddle with it, the Lord has declared: "Verily we sent down the Remindered (The Quran) and Verily we (Iyrsekves) shall be its Guardian".

Holy Quran 15:9.

To preserve Holy Quran in its original purity both in its verbal form as well as its meaning, and to keep the divine guidance always current and ever available seeker after truth, the Holy Prophet Muhammed PBUH was not sent alone into the world. As Aqron, (Messenger, Brother of Moses) was given to Moses to Assist him and to succeed him, along with the Holy Prophet, his cousin Ali, son of Abu Taleb, from the same holy family of Abraham, was given his advent to be his vicegerent and is successor. Thus was started the line of the Holy Immams (i.e., the Divinely Commissioned Guides) who were destined to be the authentic custodians of the Holy Quran and as the fountain heads of the correct knowledge of the world of God, to guide mankind towards the correct belief and the proper practice of the faith.

If these guides, the Holy Imams had been misconstrued as another authority, parallel to that of the Holy Prophet, the grace of God, avoided this confusion and established one single authority of the Last of His Apostles, as the unique one, with the unity of purpose. Hence, it was divinely destined that the line of the Divine Guides called the Imams to succeed the Last Apostle also, to be from the same stock of the Holy Family of Abrahams and this was also the covenant with Abraham.

Both, the Holy Prophet Muhammed and his vicegerent Ali were brought into the world from one and the same family, with whom the Lord had established an everlasting Covenant (Gen., 17, 7, 8). Muhammed PBUH to be promised Last Apostle, the 'Comforter' the 'Spirit of Truth,' the Ali, his cousin, his adopted son, his son-in-law and vice gerent, to be the starter of the line of the promised Twelve Princes or the twelve Holy Imams in the seed of Abraham, through Ismail (Son of Abraham)

The family Abraham and the promised last Apostle Muhammad and the Twelve Princes (Holy Imams) as follows:

## Abraham

Ismael (In the seed of Ismael)	Issac
Hashim	Jacob
Abde Munaf	Imran
Abdul Muthalih	Moses
Abdullah	Imran
Muhamed (The last Apostle of God)	Trough his Mother Mary
Fatems (The Lady of Light)	Jesus
	Abu Taleb
	1. Ali (The first of the Twelve Holy Imams or the divinely chosen guides or the promised Twelve Princes in the seed of Abraham through Ismael).
	2. Hasan (The Second Imam)
	3. Husain (The Third Imam)
	4. Zainab (Daughter)
	5. Umme Kulsum (Daughter
	6. Mohsin (Son - Martyred in the womb of his Holy mother when she was killed by the fall of the door on her)

<b>Husain</b>	
1. Ali	The first of the Twelve Holy Imams or the divinely chosen guides or the promised Twelve Princes in the seed of Abraham through Ismael
2. Hasan	The Second Imam
3. Husain	The Third Imam
4. Ali-Az-Zainulabideen	The Fourth Imam
5. Muhammed-al-Baquir	The Fifth Imam
6. Iafer-as-Sadiq	The Sixth Imam
7. Musa-al-Kazim	The Seventh Imam
8. Ali-Ar Raza	The Eighth Imam
9. Muhammed-at-Taqi	The Ninth Imam
10. Ali-an-Naqi	The Tenth Imam

11. Hasan-Al-Aksar	The Eleventh Imam
12. Muhammad-al-Makadi	The Twelfth Imam
13. (The Last, the Alive and the Awaited)	

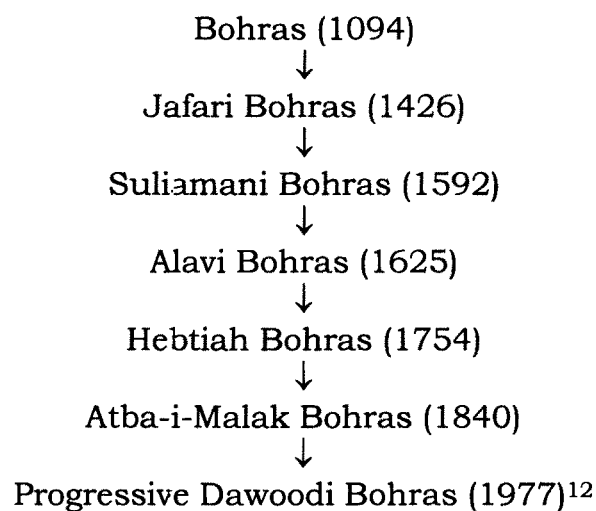
This Shia Sect believes himself as pure and real sect. They follow 3 Imams and they perform the 3 times Namazien i.e., Fajar, Zuhar, Mugharib and the Azan (The verse of the Azan is very different from Muslim Azan. They don't follow the Qibala (direction towards Makka while standing for Namaz). They celebrate Muharrum with due respect and wear black dress throughout the month of Moharrum. They also celebrate Ramzan and Bakar-Eid.<sup>10</sup>

## **BOHRA**

Bohras are the main branches or subdivision of Ismaili Shia. In 1592. Further divided into many sub-sects like Suliamanis, Dawoodis, etc. The subject is based in India although the Dawoodi Bohra school of thought originated from Yemen.

The word Bohra itself is derived from the Gujarati word Vehwahar, which is interpreted as 'trading'.

Bohras strongly lived in India and Pakistan. Today, there are close to 1 million Dawoodi Bohras worldwide. The following is the list of the divisions of Bohras.<sup>11</sup>



### **Dawoodi Bohra**

The spiritual leader of the Dawoodi Bohra community is called the Dai-ul-Mutlaq in Arabic means 'Unrestricted Missionary', Mohammed Burhanuddin is the 52<sup>nd</sup> and current Dai-ul-Mutlaq.

Dawood Bohras believe that the 21<sup>st</sup> Imam. Toyib Abi-l-Qasim, believed to be a direct descendant of Muhammed through his daughter Fatimatu-z-Zohra, went into seclusion and established the office of the Dai-ul-Mutlaq as the Imam's vicegerent, with full

authority to govern the Dawoodi Bohra community in all matters both spiritual and temporal, as well as those of his assistants, the Maidhun means 'Licensee' and Mukasir. During the Imam's occultation, a Dai-ul-Mutlaq is appointed by his predecessor. The Madun and Mukasir are appointed by Dai. A fundamental belief of the Dawoodi Bohra is that the presence of the secluded Imam is guaranteed by the presence of the Dai.

Dawoodi Bohras are a very closely knited community who seek advice from the Dai on spiritual and temporal matters. While the majority of Dawoodi Bohras have traditionally been traders, it is becoming increasingly common for them to become professional. And they believe that the education of women is equally important to that of men. A Dawoodi Bohra is highly conscious of his identity and this is especially demonstrated at religious and traditional occasions by the appearance and attire of the participants. Men wear a traditional white three piece outfit, plus a white and gold topi (cap) and women wear the rida, a distinctive form of the commonly known burqa which is distinguished from other forms of the veil due to it often being in colour and decorated with patterns and lace. Young girls wear a simple two-piece suit with a collar and Shalwar called a Jabloo Izar. They wear this with a girls topi, decorated with Sequins and sometimes lace.

Beside speaking the local languages, the Dawoodi Bohras have their own language called Lissanu-l-Dawat. The language of the

Daiwat. This is written in Arabic Script but is derived from Urdu, Gujarati and Arabic.

Remembrance of the Martyrdom of Husian, grandson of Prophet Mohammed (S.A.S) is an essential part of every Dawoodi Bohra community activity. Every year, the head of the community delivers religious, discourses for the Muharram (Islamic Month) and attended by a large number of community members.

The Dawoodi Bohras originated from Fatimid Egypt and thus their cultural mores are based on the practices of the Fatimid Imams.<sup>13</sup>

### **Bohra Zakat**

Zakat, a repayment to God of what you have been blessed with, is one of the seven pillars of the faith. Dawoodi Bohras pay many different zakawat. The religious establishment has seven tithes, some of which are encouraged and others required of its members during their life-span, before birth and after death. They are as follows:

1. Silatu l-Imam: Silah literally means “keeping contact”. This is supposed to be collected as an offering for a hidden Imam who will appear one day & the amount will be passed on to him.
2. Zakatu l-Fitra: Dawoodi Bohra tradition outlines this as a payment for the soul. Dawoodi Bohras believe that this payment is one means of cleansing the soul. It is required to be paid along with Zakatu l-Maal, both of which Dawoodi Bohras usually pay in the month of Sherullahu l-Moazzam (Ramadan). Dawoodi Bohras are strictly required to pay this for every family member as it is

compulsory. The amount is fixed, and is based by the annual worth of silver.

3. Zakatu l-Maal: This obligatory payment enjoined by the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (RA) fixed it at 2.5% of ones wealth and income at the end of a year. Literally, as outlined by the Qu'ran, the amount is 1 for every 40. If a Muslim does not have more than 40 (of any currency), Zakatu l-Maal isn't required. The majority of Muslims give their zakatu directly to the needy and poor, but Dawoodi Bohra culture and tradition outlines that it be paid from each family to the Dai l-Mutlaq, who decides how the money is split and distributed.
4. Khums "One-Fifth": As per the Qu'ran, one-fifth of the war booty was to be taken by Muhammad for his family's maintenance and also for performing the functions of the head of the community. The Shi'ah paid one-fifth of their sudden gains to their Imam from the progeny of Fatimatu-z-Zohra. The Dawoodi Bohras now pay it to the Da'i l-Mutlaq as the Hidden Imam's viceregent.
5. Haqqun Nafs "Right of the soul": This is a payment given by a Dawoodi Bohra to the Da'i l-Mutlaq at will at many times in their life. The payment is based on multiples of 119 (of whatever currency your area uses). At death, a Bohra's family members usually pay a Haqqun Nafs for the deceased as an offering of gratefulness for the life the person had lived.
6. Nazaru l-Maqam: This a symbol for the sight and help of the Imam and his viceregent. Bohras believe that putting aside money or



things of value as Nazaru l-Maqam can help them in times of hardship and need. This money is then presented to the head of the community, the Da'i l-Mutlaq.<sup>14</sup>

### **Fundamentals of the Faith**

The Dawoodi Bohra sect, unlike Sunni Islam, is based on the concept of hierarchy and each authority at the lower rank has to submit to the one at the higher rank. These religious authorities are known as hudud (singular hadd). The head of the upper rank demands total obedience from the hudud at lower rank. Thus the Dawoodi Bohra sect is one of obedience and submission to the authorities. No dissent is permitted. There is no permission given to an unauthoritative person of an open and democratic discussion on religious affairs without the consultation of the religious authority. Due to the esoteric nature of Isma'ilism, which stresses on the hidden meaning of the Qur'an and the allegorical interpretation of the Pillars of Islam, a unique philosophy on unity, creation, cosmology, eschatology, the institution of prophethood and the Imamah. Therefore a believer should submit unquestioningly to the authority of the Da'i l-Mutlaq and Imam on the discretionary powers and orders on the religious, social and observance of customary obedience to the higher rank of the religious hierarchy. Only those at the advance stage of learning could aspire to know the hidden meaning and the tawil and for this reason, the Da'i l-Mutlaq takes a strict oath of allegiance (mithaq) from his followers so as to pledge their absolute loyalty to the Imam and Da'i l-Mutlaq.

At the age of puberty, every Dawoodi Bohra, or mu'min "believer", pronounces the traditional oath of allegiance requiring the initiate to adhere to the Shari'ah and accept the religious leadership of the Imams and Da'i l-Mutlaq. This oath is renewed each year on the 18 Dhu l-Hajj, the day of 'Id al-Ghadir.<sup>15</sup>

The traditional dress of Dawoodi Bohras is kurta, pyjama, Taqiyah (cap) and saya for male and rida for female. On all religious occasions they are dressed in the above fashion. They eat in the form of traditional *thai*, a large steel plate placed on a low, circular or cross-shaped stool known as a "choomlo" or "kundli" or "tarakti". 8 Bohras circle around the *thai* and sit. Bohras begin their meal by tasting a pinch of salt, dessert and then move on to the appetizers and main course. When done, they taste the salt again and then the meal is considered over. Meals usually consist of mainly non-veg cuisine, specially mutton biryani (steamed rice with seasoned lamb/chicken, dressed with boiled eggs), gosh (spicy fried meat), deep fried chicken, tikka (chicked/mutton/fish nuggets barbecued with vinegar and spices). The meal will also include sweets, like ice cream or halwa (made of wheat dough and sweetened milk, baked in oven with some butter or ghee/oil).<sup>16</sup>

Pilgrimages to the shrines of the Mawali-e Taherin ("saints") is an important role in the devotional life of Bohras, for the facilitation of which *musafir-khaanas* and assisting charitable organizations and *awqaf* have been set up in several cities. Every new year, the first ten days of Muharram is marked by the martyrdom of Husayn and is

commemorated by setting up sabil and majalis-e 'azadari. Social gatherings are mainly on the occasions of aqiqah "naming of the newborn", mild "anniversary", mithaq "religious oath", wallmah "marriage", iftitah "opening ceremony", urs "commemoration of the deceased Du'atu l-Mutlaq", and majalis (in the month of Muharram and Ramadan).<sup>17,18</sup>

### **Imams of Dawoodi Bohra**

1. Hasan ibn Ali - 625-670 (Imam - 660-670)
2. Husain ibn Ali - 626-680 (Imam -670-680)
3. Ali ibn Husain -659-712 (Imam-680-712)
4. Mohd. ul Bakir ibn Ali -676-743 (Imam 712-743)
5. Jafer us Sadiq ibn Mohd ul Bakir 702-765 (Imam- 743-765)
6. Ismail ibn Jafer 719/722-775 (Imam 765-775)
7. Mohammad ibn Ismail 740-813 (Imam 775-813)
8. Abdullah ibn Mohammad (Ahmed al wafi) 766-829 (Imam 813-829)
9. Ahmed ibn Abdullah (Mohammad al taqi) 790-840 (Imam 829-840)
10. Husain ibn Ahmed (Abdullah) (Imam 840-909)
11. Abdullah Al Mehdi ibn Husain (Abu Muhammad Abdu l-Lah (Ubaydu l-Lah) al-Mahdibi'liah) (909-934)
12. Mohammed ul Qaim ibn Abdullah (Abu l-Qasim Muhammad al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah) (934-946)
13. Ismail Al Mansoor ibn Mohammed (Abu Tahir Isma'il al-Mansur bi-llah ) (946-953)

14. Maad-nil Muiz ibn Ismail Al Mansoor (Abu Tamim Ma'add al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah) (953-975)
15. Nizare nil Aziz ibn Moad-al Moiz (Abu Mansur Nizar al-'Aziz bi-llah) (975-996)
16. Husainil Hakim ibn Nizare-al Aziz (Abu 'Ali al-Mansur al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah) (996-1021)
17. Ali al Zahir ibn Husain al Hakim (Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah) (1021-1036)
18. Maad al Mustansir ibn Ali ai Zahir (Abu Tamim Ma'add al-Mustansir bi-llah) (1036-1094)
19. Ahmed al Mustali ibn Maadenil Mustansir (al-Musta'li bi-llah) (1094-1101)
20. Mansuril Amir ibn Ahmed Al mustai (al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah) (1101-1130)
21. Tayyeb ibn Aamir

Bohara or Vohra means the traders who basically deal with the Iron Commodities, vessels of tins, lamps (latin), mirrors, threads, bananas and the paper.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Bohra custom, at the time of burial they put a small letter of the recommendation in the hand of the dead person in this letter they name the Prophet Muhammad (SAS), Hazarat Ali and the names of the Imams of Ismailies and peers for the median of recommendation.<sup>20</sup>

## **KHOJA**

Ibn-e-Batuta saw the Khoja people in 1342 at Khambayat. Mustaali made a separate sect after the separation from Ismaili Sect of Shia in 1094.<sup>20</sup>

Originally, they were the Hindus and yet a group of Khoja followed the Swami Narian Panth. Khoja's are divided into three sect or we can say that the Khoja's division are (1) Ismaily – Major followers, (2) Sunni, (3) Isnaashari.

### **Ismaili**

Majority of followers of this sect lived in Bombay, Chennai, Kathewar. And they settled in Africa also, where they developed their business.

In 1900 Agha Khani Jamat was split into two division (1) One is Agha Khani means Imami Ismaili who accepted His highness Agha Khan, who is the present Imam. (2) Another one is, Isnaashari or Twevelver Khoja.

Afterwards the Ismaili Jamat made their Jamaat khanas in different places.<sup>21</sup>

Peer Sadaruddin was lived in Sindh 400 years ago and was the followers of Ismaili Sect. peer Sadaruddin also assumed one Hindu name and wrote a book which is based on Hindu Philosophy and this book was called 'Dasaavatara'. In this book he considered Hazarath Ali as Dasaavatara (tenth avatar of paramatma). This book is considered as the holy book among the Khoja. And also he wrote in this book that or considered that Brahma as Prophet Muhammad

(SAS), Vishnu as Hazarath Ali (father of the Husan and Husian), and Shiv as Adam (SAS).<sup>22,23,24,25,26</sup>

This religion spread in the villages of the Sindh startlingly but slowly it spreads in Kutch, Kathewar, Gujarat and Bombay also. And it is proved that the Peer Sadaruddin was the first preacher of Khoja Sect from Sindh to India.<sup>27</sup>

Khoje was killed by Halakii Khan in Iran, so they ran away from Iran to India.<sup>28</sup>

Khoje was basically Hindus, afterward they converted their religion as Ismaali and accept the Agha Khan as the Peshawa or Hazir Imam (present Imam) and also the spiritual Imam.<sup>29</sup>

In the period of General Sir Charles Napier Hasan Ali Shah joined with the General in the war of Afghan 1838 to 1842 and the Sindh war of 1842 because of this help to the Britishers. The British Government started the Pension and also gave the title of 'His Highness' and the Government of Persoa gave the title of 'Agha Khan'. The past of Agha Khan is hereditary.<sup>30</sup>

The word Khoja is a phonetic corruption of the word 'Khawaja' an Arabic/Persian title meaning Lord or Master. They are ethno religious community mainly lived in South Asia, but they slowly migrated over the centuries and spread to the different parts of the world. In India, most Khoja lived in the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and in some parts of Karnataka and the city of Hyderabad. They are mainly the followers of Ismaili Shia's, but

because of extensive periods of feigning their faith, minorities have adopted Hinduism or Sunni Islam or Twelver Shia's.<sup>31</sup>

They speak Indo-Aryan languages of Urdu, Sindhi, Gujarati, Kutchi, etc. Apart from India they also settled in Pakistan, Provinces of Sindh, East Africa, Europe and North America.<sup>32</sup>

### **Ismaili Khojas**

Peer Sadaruddin was a Persian born and was a Ismaili Da'i, or missionary who arrived in Sindh, now Pakistan from Persia. Peer Sadaruddin lived for some time amongst the rich Hindu landlords of Sindh known as the Thakurs. After studying the way of life and the religious faith, he managed to convert many Thakurs to Ismaili Shia's. The Thakurs after converting their religion as a Ismaili from Hindu religion were now known as Khawaja. Now the word is corrupted as Khoja.

Over a period of time, several Pirs came after Sadaruddin and gradually the beliefs crystallized to those of the Nizari Ismailism. After the arrival of Agha Khan-I from Iran to South Asia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the infrastructure of this community came under the direct control of the Imam.<sup>33</sup>

They paid their dues (Zakat) to the Ismaili Jamaat Khana and lived quite harmoniously within their society. The main place of worship was the Jamat Khana which served as a religious as well as social centre. So the community was organized around the Jamaat Khana.<sup>34</sup>

## **Twelver Khojas**

In the early 1800s, some Khojas went for Ziyarat and while in Najaf, they met the twelver Mujtahid of the time, Sheikh Zainul Aabedeem Mazandarani. After the discussion with Zainul Abdeen they convert their religion as Twelver Shiaism. During the time of Zainul Abdeen Mulla Kader Hussian arrived in the subcontinent. Several more Khoja families left the Ismaili Sect and learnt from Mullah Kader, the principles of the Twelver Shia faith. Some even claimed that Khojas were originally a Sunni community which resulted in a court case which ruled in favour of the Agha Khan-I. A number of Khoja families the direct control of the Imam on community affairs and formed a reform movement.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the Khojas of Shahpur are almost entirely Khattris, and a Khatri now becoming a Muslim would be called Khoja. The Khojas of Jhang, on the other hand are converted Rajputs, while some atleast of the Lahore Khojas claim Bhatia Origin and one section of the Ambala Khojas are Kayasths.

In spite of their conversion to Islam the Khojas retain many traces of the Khatri caste organization. Thus at Bhera in Shahpur they have the following sub-divisions (1) Sahgal, (2) Wohra or Bhora, (3) Sethi, (4) Kapur, (5) Duggal, (6) Rawar or Ror, (7) Gorawala, (8) Magun, (9) Mahendru.<sup>36</sup>

Other than the subdivisions of Khoja the Bhera claim to be strictly monogamous, so much so that as a rule a Khoja cannot obtain a second wife in the caste, even though his first has died and he is



driven to take his second wife from some other Muslim tribe. The surnames like Kapur, Puri, Tandon and Gambhir are the converters of the Khatri section to Khoja.

The members of Jamaat engaged in religious activities, they built mosques, imambarahs, madararas and schools over all the Khoja community is a progressive community in its own and has now spread all over the world.

Thus, the followers of the sect is actually Hindus. And the majority of the people of this sect are the followers of 'Swami Narain Panth'. But literally they converted their religion as Isnaashar (Shia).

Khoje was killed by Halaku Khan in Iran, than the Khoje community migrated towards India. Khoje converted their religion as Muslim (not a Sunni Muslim) and now they accepted the Agha Khan as Imam of Ismaily sect.<sup>37</sup>

So the believes depend on the Shia religion but not purely. They mixed many thing of other religions. In this religion we can see the 'peer', religious head, who is the representative in the absence of Hazir Iman.

While interacting with my friend Sultana Shahabuddin merchant who is the follower of Ismaily Agha Khan, in Hubli tells about the religion i.e. they followed the Namaz only for 3 times in day instead of 5 times. They don't follow the same direction which is followed by the Sunni Muslims while performing the Namaz i.e. called as Qibala. I had seen the way of worshipping of these Ismailies and Khojas. The system or way of performing Namaz is totally different,

from Sunni Muslims. It is surprising to know that they don't follow the direction toward Kaaba (Qibla), it is not compulsory for them and also reciting of some Quranic verses. The Sajada (bowing) for God is totally different. They don't touch their forehead to the Jainamaz (carpeted for offering namaz) and Rakatien is also changed.

They celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr and Bakar Eid. But they also celebrate the Diwali, Lakshmi Pooja and Amavasya Pooja, etc.

In marriages they performed Nikas by their own Qazi or Imam of Jamaat Khana. The customs of marriage is also very much resembling to the Hindu culture. They put the Sindoor on their heads and also used Kumkum and Bindies on forehead.

My friends grandmother died in Hubli but unfortunately due to the lack of followers of this sect the dead body was shifted to Jamaat Khana of Goa along with the relatives, where all the funeral custom was performed by Jamaat Khan and buried there. In Hubli they performed all the customs in her factory along with the Two uncles and their families.

Basically they were from Gujarat they settled in Hubli since the last 17 years. They settled here for their trade purpose.

The followers of the Khoja were present in the Dharwad city also.

Actually they hesitate to show their religious believes, customs. They try to hide religious books and refuse to discuss in detail about their religion. She was completed the religion knowledge upto seventh

separately. It is correspondence course from the Jamaat Khana or Imam bar of Hyderabad.

They usually use non-veg and veg food as daily food and they use wheat more than any other grain as a food.

The special dish is the Khichadi among all the Ismaili Khajas and Agha Khani. They called as Muddi Khichadi (rice and moong lentils).

They wear the Sari of Gujarat style, Chudi and Kurta, Salwar, etc. Men wear formal dress of western style.

They speaks Gujarati basically and also speak Hindi, English, Kannada, etc.

Now all the family is settled in Hyderabad since last one year because of the Jamaat Khana.

One more thing I noticed among the Agha Khanis is that, after the marriage of the son the relationship with the parents is not so deep even in many cases they don't talk with their parents and nor they help financially neither they helped them morally. They don't think about the old age of their parents.

Some of the families are converted to the Sunni Sect of Islam.<sup>38</sup>



## **MEO**

Meo or Mayo is Muslim Rajput tribe who were lived in North-Western India and Sindh Pakistan after the independence in 1947. Meo's are the largest part of the Muslim, who lived in Rajasthan and also spread in Alwar and Bharatpur districts in the north eastern part of the state and Gurgaon district of Haryana. The areas of three districts Alwar, Bharatpur and Haryana are collectively called as Mewat.

The Meo men are backwards and uneducated because of their tribal culture.

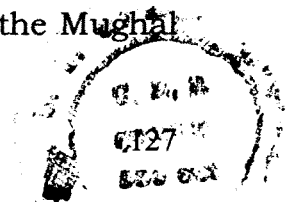
According to the census of 1984, the Meos number approximately 20,00,000 among the Muslim population.

As per the origin is concerned the Meos converted at the age of the Hazarath Abdullah Almahaz, who was the grandson of Hazarath Hasan (son of fourth Khalifa Hazarath Ali) Abdullah. In the rule of Amir Mawiya, Almahaz was migrated to the Sindh region and in that period the Meos converted to Ismal in large number.<sup>39</sup>

Basically, they were Hindu Rajputs and converted to Islam during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Khanzada, Qaimkhani and Malkana were the other Rajput communities who were lived in Mewat.<sup>40</sup>

Meos converted from Hindu Khashtari clan Mewat has the dominating majority of Meos. Meos own the major part of the agricultural land of Mewat for centuries.

Hasan Khan Mewati represented the Meos in the battle of Kanwah along with Rana Sangram Singh in 1526 against the Mughal



invader Babur Hasan Khan and his Meo warriors gave a brave fight and Hasan Khan was killed in this battle.

The Mughal emperors Babur has also written about Hasan Khan Mewate in his Iuzuk-i-Babari autobiography. To the Mughals, the Mewate were 'rebels'.<sup>41</sup> Finally from the Tablighi Jamaat which has flourished in Mewat since independence, with the aim of reform.

Almost all Meo embraced Islam due to the efforts of different Saints and Sufis in different ages. The great Sufi Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (RA) influenced to Rajputana Gujarat with his great personality and characters so the majority of Meo's converted their religion as a Muslim.<sup>42</sup> Although Meos are the largest, single sect. this is the fact that there were only Meos who first entered into the circle of Islam from the central part of India.<sup>43</sup> Initially Islam was introduced to Meos by brother-in-law of Sultan Mehamood Ghazanavi, commander Sayed Salar Ghazi and his son Sayed Masud important name are Khwaja Moeen-uddin Chisti, Hazrat Meeran Hussain Khana Sawar and Shah Nasiruddin Chirag Dehalvi.<sup>44</sup> Tablighi Jamaat has introduced the Meos at international level because the pioneer preachers of this movement are Meos.

In Meos community the poverty and illiteracy are high due to the neglected by the rulers for centuries. Only one of ten Meos is able to properly read and write.

It must be noted that Hindu inhabitants of Mewat, through belonging to the same Khatri or Kshatriya castes to which the Meos

belonged before conversion to Islam are not called Meo. Thus the word 'Meo' is both region specific and religion specific.

They settled in India and also at the time of independence of India a considerable portion of Mewat population migrated to Pakistan, mostly settled in Punjab province, Lahore, Mewat Kasur, Sheikhupura, Narowal, Salkot, Multan, Shuja Abad, Karachi and entire Sindh.

The Meos are peasants and agriculturalists. In 1920 the Tabligh Jamaat introduced spiritual reformation of Muslim Meos. Like most Indian Muslims the Meos were originally Hindu, when and how their conversion to Islam came about is unclear. It seems probable they were converted in stages first by Salar Masud Gazi (R) in the eleventh century, by Bulban in the thirteenth century and then Aurangzeb's rule in the seventeenth century. Almost every Meo village has a mosque.<sup>45</sup>

The Meos have two strong identities, both of which they are equally proud of (1) Their Muslim identity, going back to their conversion to Islam by various Sufi Saints who began settling in their territory from the eleventh century onwards and whose Shrines/Mausoleums or Dargah/Mazars today dot the entire country side in Mewat. (2) Their Rajput heritage and lineage.<sup>46</sup>

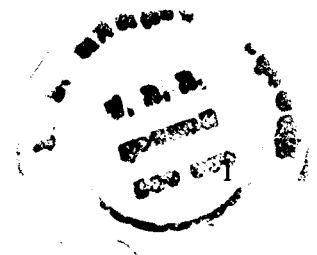
### **Language**

The mother tongue of Meos is Mewati. This Language is spoken all over the Mewat but every person belonging to Mewat is not necessarily Meo. Generally, the residents of Mewat are called Mewati.

Mewati is a language resembling with Haryanvi, Braj Bhasha and Rajasthani. Urdu and Mewati have also many common features. Mewati has great treasure of literary work including poetic ballads, sonnets, proverbs etc. These are compiled in the form of couplets.<sup>47</sup>

Meo men are tall, with ponderous turbans woven around their heads, dressed in long flowing robes. The Meos are Muslim Rajputs, about a ten million-strong community, known for its admixture of Hindu and Islamic customs, practices and beliefs. The Meos have two identities, both of which they are equally proud of. On the one hand, they claim to be Muslims, tracing their conversion to various Sufi saints who began settling in their territory from the eleventh century onwards, and whose shrines or 'dargahs' today dot the entire Mewati countryside. On the other hand, they also claim to be Rajputs and direct.<sup>48</sup>

The Meo have been subject to a number of recent ethnographic studies. These books have dealt with issues such as marriage and self perception of the community. "In the study of family and kinship, social anthropologists have often focused on unilateral descent groups or on marriage, but rarely on the specific nature of the brother-sister relationship. Until now this relation has been reduced either to one of siblingship, more often, consanguinity, or to a form of incest prohibition that leads to matrimonial exchange. This book presents the kinship system of the Meo, a Muslim community of 'Rajput' caste of north India, where the brother-sister relationship transcends the



distinctions between consanguines and affines to pervade relations both before and after marriage.

“The author develops the notion of ‘metasiblingship’ to convey the specific nature of this relationship. In the vocabulary of kinship studies, meta siblingship is defined as the chain of two brother-sister pairs linked by a marriage. It is enacted in life-cycle rites in the complimentary between the father’s (married) sister, who leads these ceremonies, and the mother’s brother, who is responsible for the principal prestations.

“In terms of family and kinship, and associated ceremonies, myths and legends, the Meo have long been regarded as unusual among Indian Muslims. They forbid what is regarded as a diacritical Muslim kinship practice – patrilineal parallel-cousin marriage—as well as cross-cousin marriage, and follow north Indian, Hindu kinship rules. Following the example of Louis Dumont, Raymond Jamous engages with the Meo kinship terminology, the relation of kinship and territory, marriage alliance, and marriage rituals and prestations – all of which are ‘classical’ kinship themes. What emerges is a completely new perspective on the structure of north Indian kinship, transcending and encompassing the opposition of the ‘alliance’ and ‘descent’ approaches. Although, the Meos today follow most Muslim customs, they still follow traditional Hindu marriage rituals and kinship patterns. Cousin marriage is still taboo among this group. Attempts to break this tradition have met strong opposition. In



addition, Meos do not observe the Muslim tradition of secluding their women. Meo society is divided into at least 800 exogamous clans.<sup>49</sup>

The place of origin of the Meos is Mewat. It is a region that comprises southern Haryana and north-eastern Rajasthan and is known for its mixture of Hindu and Islamic customs, practices and beliefs.<sup>50</sup>

Geographically, Mewat district is situated between 26 deg. And 30 deg. North latitude and 76 deg. and 78 deg. East longitude. Gurgaon district bounds it on its North, while Rewari district lies to its West and Faridabad district to its East. On South, the district shares its boundary with Alwar district of Rajasthan. Mewat district is largely composed of plains but has hills of Aravali range. Inconsistency in Mewat topography is evident from its patches of land with hills and hillock of the Aravali Mountain (Kala Paharh) on the one hand and plains on the other.

Mewat, land of the Meos, has its genesis in its tribal inhabitants, the Meo tribals, who are agriculturalists. The area is a distinct ethnic and socio-cultural tract. The Meos, who trace their roots to the early Aryans of North India, call themselves Kshatriyas and have preserved their social and cultural traits to a surprisingly large extent, unlike the other tribes of nearby areas. During the regime of the Tughlak dynasty in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, these people embraced Islam but till today, they have maintained their age-old distinctive ethno-cultural identity. It must be noted that Hindu inhabitants of Mewat, though belonging to the same Kshatriya castes

to which the Meos belonged before conversion to Islam, are not called Meo. Thus the word “Meo” is both region-specific and religion-specific. The Mewat district of Haryana was carved out of some tehsils of Gurgaon and Faridabad districts in 2005. However, the boundary of Mewat region is not precisely defined. The region is semi-arid with scanty rainfall and this has defined the vocations the Meos follow. Poverty and illiteracy are high due to neglect by the rulers for centuries. Only one in ten Meos is able to properly read and write.

In India, the Meo are found mainly in the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. They are still concentrated in the historic Mewat region. In Pakistan, the Meos are found in Punjab and Sindh provinces.

#### **The Meo of Dera Ghazi Khan District**

There is a community of Meo settled in Dera Ghazi Khan District of south Punjab. They are said to have settled in the region during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This community is now Seraiki speaking, having been settled in the region for 5 centuries, and has no connection with Meo of Mewat. Their main settlements are Wah Mayo and Mayo, as well as five smaller villages, near the town of Jampur. Meos of Rajanpur (Qasba Meo) are the kins of Meos of Mewat. Actually they are the footprints of Meos migrated from Iraq and settled there but their relative migrated to Sind and afterward to Rajasthan. Meos of Rajanpur are equally proud being Meo as Meos of Mewat. Meos all over the world are the haplo group of human being.

Meo or Mayo is a Muslim Rajput tribe from north-western India. They speak Mewali language and converted their religion by many different Sufi Saints in different years. Even they were converted to Islam. They followed some customs of Hindus. Majority of them were settled in villages and main occupation of Meos is the agriculturist.<sup>51</sup>

Since 1947, however a revival of Islamic tradition has forced many Meos to conform to Islamic norms, some Meos were reconverted to Hinduism by Arya Samaj after independence and these reconverted Hindus are no longer called Meos.

The revivalist movement Tablighi Jamat, reform the Meo community in Islamic norms. So we can freely say that there is no second opinion about it that from ruling Khashtaris, Meos are first nation to say Labbaik on the call of Islam.

Hazarath Abdullah Almahaz was the grandson of the Hazarath Hasan (Son of Hazarath Ali IV Calipha), migrated to the Sindh because of the violence of the Governor of Baghdad. For the first time they converted to Islam in India.

## **MEMON**

Memon an ethnic group tracing their roots largely to Sindh. Kutch and Kathiawar and are sometimes seen as transitional between the two regions. A Sunni Muslim group, Memons predominantly adhere to Hanafi Sunni Islam although some are Maliki. Historically Memons are a mercantile community (and are generally referred to as a business community in Pakistan and India). Most of them are merchants and traders, industrialists, professionals and generally hold white collar jobs.<sup>52</sup>

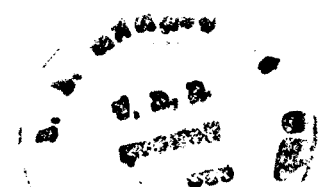
### **History**

Traditionally, the name Memon is an adaptation of Momin meaning faithful. This was used when this community converted to Islam.

### **Sindhi, Gujarati and Arab Origins**

More than one hypothesis has been forwarded about the origins of the Memon community. These hypotheses, although similar, differ in their details. This could be because Memons have had to rely on oral history in order to determine their origins.

According to Anthovan, those Lohanas of Thhato who converted to Islam became Memons and were invited by Jarejho Roa Khanghar. ruler of Bhuj (1548-1584) to settle in Bhuj. It is from there that Kutchi Memons migrated to Kathiawar and Gujarat. Surat in Gujarat was an important trading center during 1580 to 1680 and Memons made their bounty there. Later, the Memons reached Bombay. Diwan



Bherumal M. Advani writes that all the Memons of Bombay, Gujarat and Kutch are Lohanas from Sindh.<sup>53</sup>

Another theory states that Memons originated in 1422 CE from Thatta in Sindh. The converts were first called Momins or Mumins and the term, with the march of time, changed to Memons. The story related therein states that some 700 Lohana families, (inclusive, perhaps of some earlier covert and neo-Muslim converts) comprising of some 6178 individuals, converted to Islam at the hands of one Sayed Yusuffuddin Qadri (rahimathullah) and finding themselves banished by their erstwhile Hindu brothers were forced to migrate. This was also stated by Hussain Kassim Dada from his Presidential Chail at the first ever All India Memon Conference in Rajkot in the year 1931.

A fourth theory according to Karimbaksh Khalid is that certain soldiers of Arab tribe Banu Tamim of Qatif, near Ta'if, numbering about a few millions, came to Sindh along with Muhammad bin Qasim, where they were known as Maymenah, right-wingers in the army: this word later evolved to become Memons. According to this theory, the Memons were originally Arabs.<sup>54</sup>

### **Branch**

Memon community may be divided into three main groups. Those who traced their ancestors from Kutch region are identified as Cutchi Memon and they speak Kutchi dialects. Those who traced their ancestry to Kathiawar are identified as simply Memon or Kathiawadi Memons or Halai Memons and they speak Memoni. Those Memon who

remained in Sindh (their ancestor never migrated to neighboring regions such as Kutch and Kathiawar) are identified as Sindhi Memon and speak Sindhi language.

Many Memon, especially, Kathiawadi Memon, further distinguished themselves into various sub-groups which generally refer to their ancestral villages or towns such as Kutiyana Memons, Gondal wala (Aahamdani) Bantva Memons. Jutpur Memons, Dhoraji Memons (Dhoraji, Rajkot) Bombaywala Memons (whose ancestors used to live in the main city of Bombay and its suburbs) and Deeplai Memon. It is estimated that the number of Kathiawadi Memon, other than Cutchi and Sindhi Memon, worldwide are over one million.

Generally, a Memon is a Muslim person born within a Memon family which traces its ancestry back to the descendants of the community originating from Sindh whose members first embraced Islam, including Halai Memon, Okhai Memon, Sindhi Memon, Kutchi Memon, Kathri, Tharati, Nasarpuria and others.

### **Language**

Memons speak an unwritten language called Memoni, a mixture of Sindhi and Kutchi which belongs to the Indic North-Western Zone family of languages. While the Sindhi and Kutchi languages are spoken by both Muslims and non-Muslims, Memoni refers exclusively to the vernacular of the Kathiawadi Memons who are predominately Sunni Muslims that migrated from Sindh to the neighbouring regions of Kutch and Kathiawar in Gujarat several centuries ago. In stress,

intonation, and everyday speech, Memoni is very similar to Sindhi, but it borrows vocabulary extensively from Gujarati, Hindustani and lately English. Like most languages of the Indian subcontinent the sentence structure of Memoni generally follows subject → object → verb order.<sup>55</sup>

## **Social Structure**

### **Role of the Jamaat**

Memons generally tie to their respective local societies called “Jamat”, literally means congregation, which are generally established for the betterment and social welfare of its members which may include issuance of marriage license, matrimonial dispute resolution, adaptation and enforcement of the rules and guidelines against certain undesirable customs, establish healthcare and education centres, provide various facilities for the community need and also financial support and housing for the poor and needy members and sometime non-members.<sup>56</sup>

### **Memons Worldwide**

Memons migrated from Sindh to Kutch, and later to Kathiawar (Kathiawad) and other part of Gujarat. Memons spread throughout the Indian Ocean basin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but most Memons lived in Kathiawar, prior to the independence of Pakistan. Many later settled in Pakistan. Today, they are scattered throughout India and the port city of Karachi in Pakistan, with significant communities in the United Kingdom, Canada, USA, Bangladesh, Srilanka, UAE, Saudi Arabia,

Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Kenya, Mauritius, Singapore, Australia and Burma.

Memons are known for their involvement in business and philanthropy, with Memons having played a major part in the building of Pakistani industry, an increasing number of Memons are turning to professional occupations.

Owing to their tradition of management and attention to detail, Memons are a prosperous community. They have built vast business legacies, and a high percentage of Memons around the world belong to the upper-middle class.<sup>57</sup>

### **Religious Beliefs and Customs**

#### **Religious Practices**

Memons mostly follow the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam although some are known to follow other Sunni schools such as the Maliki and Shafi'i schools.

#### **Marriage Customs**

Memons usually marry within their own social affiliation (Jamat) (endogamy), depending on circumstances a group (Jamat) may be as small as few hundred families and as large as few thousand families. For example Cutchi Memon define their Jamat to be entire group having very few sub-groups whereas Kathiawadi Memons are branched into few dozens sub-groups. For Kathiawadi Memon a group, by and large, usually shares their ancestor village in Kathiawad as a reference point. Marriage between close relatives especially first cousins is discouraged but such reunion is possible where a group is



too small. Marriage outside the social group (e.g. marrying a Surti Muslim) is now quite common and accepted by most Memons, although some community elders may still discourage it.<sup>58</sup>

### **Social Contribution from the Memon Community**

The Memon community can be proud of the social work it has done. Many countries across the globe have seen this through the many Memon humanitarian ground workers. Examples such as the Calcutta, Kashmir, Turkey and Quetta earthquakes. Gujrat, Karachi and Bosnia are just a few recognized achievements of Memon humanitarian work.

Memons help people in need purely on a humanitarian ground upholding the moto “social work will better our society”. A few examples of their contribution are as follows –

- Abdullha Hajee Adam Zaveri and his brother, Abdul Karim Hajee Adam Zaveri owner of Dada Abdullha Co., was a Memon Indian-South African businessman. It was a court case concerning him that brought Mahatma Gandhi to South Africa. Abdullha Hajee Adam Zaveri assisted Gandhi and both are founder of Natal Indian Congress in 1894; Abdullha Hajee Adam Zaveri was 1<sup>st</sup> President and Abdul Karim Hajee Adam Zaveri was 2<sup>nd</sup> President of Natal Indian Congress as per Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography.
- Larkana college of commerce established by Late Abdul Fatah Memon (1920-2002), former MLA Sindh Assaebly (1952), Ambassador of Pakistan to Saudi Arabia and Somalia (1963) in early fifties.

- The Jama Masjid of Durban built by the Memons, is the largest MASJID in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Abdullah Haroon established Hajiyani Hanifabai Girls School in Karachi in 1914, which was the first girl's school in Sindh for Muslim girls.
- Hajiyani Khadija, although an illiterate widow, was the founder of Raunaq-elislam chain of girls schools, colleges and industrial homes under the banner of the Pakistan Memon Women's Educational society.

“Salik Papatia” compiled Gujarati Reader Sahitay Sindhu for the Gujarati students of secondary schools in the early sixties, and got it published at his own expense.

- Kenya Mombasa, where the Memon community after emigrating just 50 years ago, built 200 mosques and madrasas (religious schools).
- Hajee Sir Ismail Sait, a philanthropist of the Kutchi Memon community of Bangalore raised the mosque about 100 years ago, with his own funds. He built the mosque for dwellers of the locality, now called Frazer Town. After the mosque came up, the road was named Hajee Sir Ismail Sait Mosque Road, in short, Mosque Road.
- Adam Noor, Founder of World Memon Organization. Recently visited North America to check the progress of community welfare program. He is also writing a book on his experience as the founder of World Memon Organization. He is also a well-known social worker in Mumbai.<sup>59</sup>

### **Sait (Clan)**

The Saites are a community that branched off from the Kutchi Memons who are essentially Kutchi speaking, Sunni Muslims, who originally hail from Kutch in Gujarat, a state of India.

### **History and Origin**

Historically, Kutch was a princely state and this kingdom included Bhuj, Anjar, Lakhsar, Mandvi, etc. The Kutchi Memons are now spread all over the globe with concentrated population in Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Chennai, and Ooty.

Kutchi Memons have this unique surname SAIT (for men) and BAI (for women). The community has a very modern outlook and most individuals are educated. The community is very peculiar about its unique identity and in many orthodox pockets marriage outside the community is still looked upon as treachery. The written Language is Urdu but regional languages are used for local communications.

The size of the population cannot be determined due to its lack of concentration but estimations would put their number close to 0.4 million people. The community follows all the basic Sunni Islamic tradition but with somewhat different practices.<sup>60</sup>

### **Famous Memons**

Various Memon magazine and books have been written, praising the achievements of philanthropists and businessmen that have emerged from this community like,

Abdul Sattar Edhi, "Nishan-E-Imtiaz" Ambulance and Hospital Services, Burial of homeless, women welfare, orphanage and the

founder of the Edhi Welfare Trust Foundation. Khurram Bashir Memon, Famous for his contributions in guiding the community towards prosperity and brotherhood in the world at large.

Likewise in Memon community so many famous businessmen, industrialists, educators, administrators, politicians, doctors, actors, producers and also the great community leader like Sir Iqbal Sacranie, leader of the Muslim Council of Great Britain and Awardee of Social Services from Queen of England. And also the great men like Abdul Razzak Yaqoob Gandhi (creator of ARY TV Channels including QTV, ARY News, etc.)

Memons lived not only in India and Pakistan but also they settled in Western countries, Africa, Middle East, Srilanka and other countries. And the famous organization is known as World Memon Organization.<sup>61</sup>

Memon community were converted to Islam by some Sufi Saints. They belong to the main sect of Islam i.e. Anle Sunnatwal Jamat and follows Hanfi School of Law, some are Malaki and Shafi.

The main branches of Memons are Kutch or Kutchi Memon, Kathewadi Memon and Halai Memon or Sindhi Memon. Memon community spreads worldwide and much contributed to their own community.

The Sait Clan is the branch of the Kutchi memon. The community is very peculiar about its unique identity and religiously they were orthodox people.<sup>62</sup>

The word Momin is corrupted by the wrong pronounciation as a Memon. Originally they were from the Lohana, Sindh and Kutch and belong to the Katchia Hindu family. They converted their religion with the blessings of the Hazarath Sayyed Yusufuddin Baghdadi of Chistiya orders in 1422 AD. After 120 years they were migrated from the Sindh to Kutch and were settled in Gujarat.

Memons at the time of British Government they came to Thana, but they settled in the Coastal areas in earlier than the Thana. They linked with the trade of oil and the dry fish. They export the dry fishes to the Gujarat Khandesh, Jaisalpur, Deccan, Malwa, Bidar, etc. Aabakutchi was the famous trader of the Dry Fish.

They were usually gentle, pious, kindhearted, generous and well wisher of their community. They followed the Hanafi Fiqh of school and built many mosques.

## **TAMIL MUSLIMS**

Tamil Muslims is a community of Multi-ethnic group of Islam, mostly lived in South Asia and South East Asia. According to the Indian Census of 2001, there were atleast 2 million Tamil Muslims in the southern province of Tamil Nadu, not only in Tamil Nadu but also in abroad like Malaysia and Singapore. Tamil Muslims in Malaysia which is 2.6% from total population in Malaysia and in North America and Western Europe.<sup>63</sup>

Tamil Muslims are identifiable by a common language and religion. Otherwise they belong to multiple ethnicities such as Dravidian, Aryan, Oriental, Malay, Semitic, Turkish, Arabic and Moorish. Hence their complexions range from fair to dark; facial bone structures range from sharp/oval to rounded. This was possible due to frequent trading and marriage relations in South East Asia. There races, by the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to be listed in official gazetteer of different nations as Lebbai, Markayar, Rowther, Kayalar (in Maharashtra), Sonagar (in Srilanka), Mamak (in Malaysia), Chulia (in Singapore), etc. As a result, there is no uniformity in customs and ceremonies within and between districts and nations on occasions like births, marriages and deaths.

Tamil Muslim families are patrilocal though their marriages incorporate Islamic mahr practice. For instance, it is common to see a groom pay the bride mahr sum of 10,000 rupees and the bride in turn would pay the groom a dowry sum of 100,000 rupees though practice of dowry is banned by Islamic doctrines. Tamil Muslims practice

monogamy and male circumcision. Like the mangalsutra of Tamil Hindu brides, Tamil Muslim brides wear black beads called Karumani (tied by the groom's mother to the bride's neck on the day of nikkah).

Tamil Muslim women wear white thuppatti instead of black burqas (that are popular among Urdu-speaking Muslims) and continue to use their maiden names after marriage as the concept of surname is non-existent in the community and also as a precaution against discrimination of converts based on their pre-Islamic caste identities. This has remained a hurdle in genealogical research.<sup>64</sup>

### **Economy**

Generally Tamil Muslims involved in various trade like retail, Mutton shops, shops in Foreign Bazaar. They also involve in Gems trade and Leather industry.

Due to the Gulf opportunities, lot of Tamil Muslims went to Gulf. Now lakhs of Tamil Muslims spread over Gulf countries and also in Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. This brought prosperity to Tamil Muslim community.

### **Education**

After independence, the Tamil Muslims begun to create lot of schools, colleges of their own. Jamal Mohamed College in Trichy, New College in Chennai, Waqf Board College in Madurai, Zahira College in Colombo, Osmania College in Jaffna are some of famous service based Tamil Muslim colleges. In mid 80's lot of Muslim self financing colleges were started. Now crescent Engineering college became BS Abdur Rahman University, the first Muslim university in Tamil Nadu.

In Tamilnadu, Muslims school education is okay and level is relatively equal to general literacy level. But in higher education Muslims lacks, its due to their family members and relatives take them for jobs in Gulf and South East Asia (Mainly Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei in South Asia) in young age itself. And Muslims generally involved in Trade, so that their children also interested in that and missing higher education. But now slowly picture changes.<sup>65</sup>

### **Literature**

Indian Tamil Muslim culture and literature are heavily influenced by the Qadiri flavour of Sufism. Their domain range from mystical to medical, from fictional to political, from philosophical to legal.

The earliest Tamil Muslim literary works could be traced to 14<sup>th</sup> century in the form of Palsanthmalai, a small work of eight stanzas. In 1572, Seyku Issaku, better known as Vanna Parimala Pulavar, published Aayira Masala Venru Vazhankum Adisaya Puranam detailing the Islamic principles and beliefs in a FAQ format. In 1892, Aali Pulavar wrote the Mikurasu Malai. The epic Seerapuranam by Umaru Pulavar is dated to 17<sup>th</sup> century and still considered as the crowning achievement of Tamil Muslim literature. Other significant works of 17<sup>th</sup> century include Thiruneri Neetham by Sufi master Pir Mohammad, Kanakabhisheka Malai by Seyku Nainar Khan (alias Kanakavirayar), Tirumana Katchi by Sekathi Nainan and the Iraq war ballad Sackoon Pataippor. Notable publications of 18<sup>th</sup> century



include Yakobu Sithat Patal, a medical primer on Siddha Vaithyam (distinguished from Ayurvedic medicine).

Nevertheless, an independent Tamil Muslim identity evolved only in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century triggered by the rise of Dravidian politics as well as the introduction of new mass communications and lithographic technologies. The world's first Tamil Islamic Literature Conference was held in Trichi in 1973. In early 2000, the Department of Tamil Islamic Literature was set up in the University of Madras. Literature such as Kavikko Abdur Rahman, Mu.Metha, Jainulabudeen, Pavalar Inqulab, A. Rokkiah and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the 11<sup>th</sup> President of India, helped push the frontiers of enlightenment into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The pioneering fortnightly journal Samarasam was established in 1981 to highlight and cater to the ethnic Tamil Muslim community's issues.<sup>66</sup>

### **Vocabulary**

Tamil Muslim vocabulary includes several peculiar words that cannot be found among non-Muslim Tamils like thuppatti (purdah), thozhugai (prayer), nonbu (fasting), kayili (lungi), chacha or saachipa (younger paternal uncle), peribaapu (elder paternal uncle), chachi or saachi (wife of younger paternal uncle), periya vaapa (wife of elder paternal uncle), pallivaasal (mosque), aanam (curry), et al.

### **Medicine**

Unani physician Akbar Kousar was awarded by the southern governments of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for his work on kasini herbs.

## **Art and Architecture**

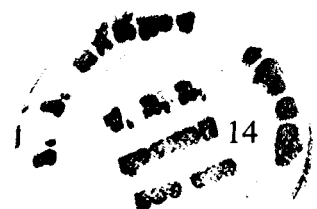
Artistes like Nagore E.M. Hanifa, Nassar, Ameer Sultan, Rajkiran, B.H. Abdul Hameed, Mansur Ali Khan and A.R. Rahman are popular in the Tamil music and film industry.

Tamil mosques are typically of small scale and almost always painted white and green (reflecting peace and prosperity) and entrances prefixed with stylized 786. The first Tamil mosque, Kadarkarai Masjid, was built in early 7<sup>th</sup> century in Kayalpattinam.<sup>67</sup>

## **Cuisine**

Tamil Muslim cuisine is a syncretic mixture of Tamil Hindu and Urdu Muslim recipes and flavours. Its distinguishing feature is the total absence of hot kebab and pungent colorful spices that tend to permeate most Indian non-vegetarian food. The spice used is called rampe or pandan leaves. This leaf gives out a distinct flavour only when cooked.

Tamil Muslim cuisine also includes the use of Masi or dry fish, which is powdered and used with many different items. But this is limited to the coastal regions. They also use ada urugai, which is whole lime pickled in salt but with no chillies; this is mashed and mixed with the Masi powder. The combination gives a sour taste and a distinctly different flavor. Though the diet of Tamil Muslims is non-vegetarian, they do not eat beef. Coconut oil is used for hair-dressing while many chew betel without tobacco after a heavy lunch and also drink tea.<sup>68</sup>



## **Places**

Even though Tamil Muslims are spread over, in some places they live commun life. Kayalpattinam, Kizhakkarai, Kuthanallur, Labbaikudikadu, Mimisal, Pallappatti, Rajagiri, Veeracholan in Tamil Nadu, Kathankudi, Sammandurai, Muttur, Kalmunai, Kinniaya, Peruvalai, Purakkottai in Sri lanka, Yangoon in Myanmar. Tsim Sha Tsui in Hong Kong, Penang and KL in Malaysia are some places where Tamil Muslims collectively live.<sup>69</sup>

## **TAMIL MUSLIM**

### **LABBE**

In the book, History of South India, the writer has mentioned about another community of Arabian race called as Labbe.

He also mentions that they migrated to India during the reign of Hajjaj bin Yusuf of Baghdad. Among those Arabs arrived at the Coast of Konkan and were called Nawaiths. Likewise a few arrived at the eastern coast of Coromandel and the Cape of Camoron were known as the 'Labbe'.

The word 'Labbe' is derived from the Arabic word 'Labbaik', because the reason of that statement is mentioned that the poor when they arrived in this region. The regional people called them to work they said 'Labbaik' which means 'present'.<sup>70</sup>

Col Wilkind said that when the Arabs migrated to India they don't know the other language of India, they knew only the Arabic language. So usually they express their feelings with the signs only. If any Indian called them, they answered as Labbaik. Slowly, the word 'Labbe' as corrupted word of 'Labbaik'. The letter 'k' was removed from this word.<sup>71</sup>

'Labbe' is among those Arabian race who migrated to India in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century AD, at kabulpatan of coromandel for the purpose of trade. After the long period they married the regional converted girls and the childrens of this combination is called as 'Labbe'.<sup>72</sup>

Labbe is one of the Muslim communities sharing the blood relations with the Tamil community and were traders of skins, horns, etc. Many Arabic words mixed in their language.<sup>73</sup>

The combination of two Muslim race one is Indian and the other one is Arabic, who were the traders.<sup>74</sup>

In the age of Tipu Sultan and other Muslim rulers they converted the regionals to Islam so Labbe is considered as a mixture community of Muslim.<sup>75</sup>

Labbe word is the modern word because in old Tamil literature the word Santugan is used for the Arab country. So this community was made up with the combinations of Arabians and South Indians. They spread in the different parts of the India like the different places like Chennai Coromandal Kabul Patan Vellore, Ambur, Vanambadi, etc. They are very hard working by nature and also religious and pious. The community took interest in the field of education and introduced Madarsas for religious education.<sup>76</sup>

## **MURKIYAR**

Murkiyar, they were the traders of Srilanka and were the owners of many boats also. They migrated from Arab to India to free themselves from the clutches of Hajaj-bin-Yusuf, the governor of Baghdad and the regional people of that time questioned about their identity they called themselves as Murkab. On this basis, the regional Hindus called them as Murkiyar, they consider themselves superior than the Labba bin or Labbe.

Murkiyar is one of the tribe or community of Muslim from the combination of Arab and Hindu races, this generation is called as Murkiyar, who were the traders and very different from Labbe.<sup>77</sup>

Nainar : Nainar is one of the high class sect among the Hindus and during many Muslim rulers they got converted to the community of Muslim but even they also used the Nainar with their names.<sup>78</sup>

Nainar is one of the high class sect among Hindus. During many Muslim rulers they got converted to Islam, but, yet they used the word Nainar with their names.<sup>79</sup>

## KONKANI MUSLIMS

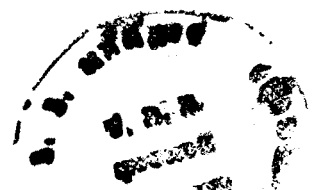
Muslims living in the Konkan region of India is called as Konkani Muslim. Konkani Muslim is a sub-ethnic group of Maharashtrian Muslims. They mainly lived in Mumbai and also settled in Arab States of the Persian Gulfs, the UK, the USA, South Africa and East Africa for working purpose.

Muslims from the Maharashtrian districts of Raigad, Thane, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and Goa state are generally regarded as Konkani Muslims.<sup>80</sup>

A dialect of the Marathi language called Bankoti / Sangameshwari, is generally spoken by only the Muslims of Southern Raigad and Ratnagiri district. And the Muslim of Goa and Sindhudurg speaks the Konkani language. Muslims of Malvan, Santawadi and former Maratha princely states speaks a dialect of Marathi / Konkani called Malvani language.<sup>81</sup>

Konkani Muslims traces their ancestral back to the Arab traders who arrived on the western coast of India during the Medieval Era, while some are descended from intermarriages with converters. In Medieval times there was a trade links with Indian parts of Sopara, Goa and Mahim.

Muslims of Malabar as well as Konkan coasts represents the oldest Islamic settlements in India. The most peculiar characteristics of these Muslims are the common origin as Maritime Mercantile communities. Muslims first arrived in the Konkan in 699. Muslims were already present in India a decade before the invasion of Sindh by



Mohammed bin Qasim in 711. Thus Konkani Muslims along with the Mopalas are among the oldest Muslim communities in India. In the 1300 year of their existence, they have been actually conscious of being Muslim as well as being perceived as such by others. Throughout their long history, the Konkani Muslim have overcome the triple challenges of surviving. (1) The assimilative power of syncretistic Hinduism, (2) The crusading zeal of the Portuguese backed by their armed invasion in the sixteenth century, (3) Challenge of westernization as represented by the British Colonial power. Surviving as a distinct Muslim community is not a small achievement particularly when seen in the light of the fact there were no Muslim political powers to protect them when they first landed.<sup>82</sup>

Among the Konkani Muslims the history of the communities is not known in a clear and systematic manner.

Saint Makhdoom Ali Mahimi, was a Sufi Saint from the Konkan in India. He was born into a family of Arab travelers who had settled down on the Island of Mahim (Bombay). He was given the Moniker Qutub-E-Kokan (Konkan's Pole Star).<sup>83</sup>

Konkani Muslims sprang up on the Konkan coast of India in the seventh century. Like the Nawayathis, they also share some common characteristics like the origin of the Arab Peninsula, Gazetteer of the Bombay city and Island and the Persian Gulf region. Secondly they were the followers of Shafism. Finally, they have common descent from Arab Mariners and merchants.



The Muslims of the coast of Bombay state now styled Konkaniis were formerly known as Naitias or Navayatis. A group who were initially called Nawayat but are now known as Konkani Muslims inhabiting the region of Konkani.<sup>84</sup>

In earlier days they commonly wear the usual Muslims jacket, shirt and pyjamas, with a large brahmanical turban, casting a scarf or shawl round their necks, very much in the fashion of that worn by Brahmins in gala dress. They are usually rather above average height and always well built with small, well-proportioned hands and feet, their profile are clear cut, the nose generally aghilini, full frank eyes and massive foreheads, usually ladies cover themselves with a veil on the head, their descent from the best Muslim blood in India. They present themselves as superior land owners in western India. Probably they got land for services performed during the Bijapur and Moghul dynasties. The Konkani Muslims were largely employed in the customs department and many of them appointed as a mamlutdar and mahalkarees (middle man or farmers of revenues). Several of his descendants rose to high official rank in various departments and one of them was stated as Karbharee (Prime Minister) to the Late Nawab of Janjira. Above all, the Konkani Muslaman is an intelligent, resolute and thoroughly to be dependent upon in an emergency.

Konkani Muslims later on settled in the eastern part of the native quarter of Bombay, near where the Jama Masjid was built around Dongri fort on a tank and gardens belonging to a Konkani Muslim.

Konkani Muslims are fluent in Konkani, an Indo-Aryan language grammatically and structurally close to and written in the Marathi (Devanagari) script. Konkani is the official language of Goa, a neighbouring state. The Konkani language spoken by Muslims is heavily infused with words of Arabic and Persian origin. It remains the common language of public communication in the rural area and in semi-urban and urban areas. Urdu is often an alternative language. Konkani Muslim Education Society (KMES) founded in 1927 with a number of schools. In late 1999 the KMES was in the process of establishing a medical school. A detailed study of Urdu schools in the area. As Urdu is the richest repository of literature in Islamic studies, as the language of power, authority and law courts, it began to be widely adopted by Bombay Muslims.<sup>85</sup>

The Konkani Muslims are divided into two major categories, generally namely, those who are the progeny of Arab intermarriages with the women of the cultivating castes, were called as Jamaatis, second categories is called as Daldis means those who are converters to Islam. However, resent this term and prefer being called Mahigir (fishermen). The Jamaatis are conscious and proud of their Arab ancestry and constitute the elite group. The Mahigirs are the descendants of the colis, the Konkani fishermen. The two categories are spatially differentiated due to occupational differences. Mahigirs live in the fishing villages, whereas the Jamaatis are mainly concentrated in the inland villages as agriculturists and as those involved in forestry and mango orchards.

The Konkani Muslims also possess some important attributes of an ethnic group i.e. Moplahs of Malabar. They are the progeny of Arab immigrants and Indian women, they speak the same dialect of Konkani language, and marry among themselves, in anthropological terms they are generally endogenous. Yet according to A.R. Momin, the Konkani Muslim community has a well defined system of ranking and stratification. Topmost in the hierarchy are those who distinguish themselves from the rest on account of purity of descent and ancestral nobility. Families with surnames like Mulla, Zakaria, Faqih, Farid, Khatib, Patel, Burbere, Narvil, Hani, Qazi, Tase and Muallim belong to this category. Surname like Chivne, Bolinjkar, Bhoje and Jairumi. They are considered to be lower down in the hierarchy on account of differences in occupation and family background. Lower than these two are wazah (or wajas as they are locally known) and were traditionally a weaving sub-caste. Some of them formerly used to sell dried fish which is considered to be a lowly occupation in the Konkani Muslim subculture. They used to live in separate localities and used to no intermarriages between the Wazahas and other Konkani Muslims. Usually, very recently, Konkani Muslims have started giving their girls in marriage to those Wazah boys who have acquired wealth and education and have thereby raised their status in the social hierarchy as a consequence of the impact Islamization and the spread of modern education. At the lowest rung of the hierarchy are the Telis. The Telis are the oil pressers. Though settled with Konkani Muslims, they were barely considered a part of the group. There is no

intermarriages between them and later, although their dialect, rituals and customs are the same like the Konkani Muslims.<sup>86</sup>

However, the marriages are still arranged by the parents. Most middle class Konkani Muslims prefer marriages within their own groups or secondly they prefer Deccan Muslims, followed by other Urdu speaking Muslims. A.R. Momin reports Konkani intermarriages with upwardly mobile Momins of Bhiwandi. Divorce and remarriage is rare among the Konkanis. It may both increased due to the westernization and modernization. Marriage age for women has increased as a result of longer years spent in college education.

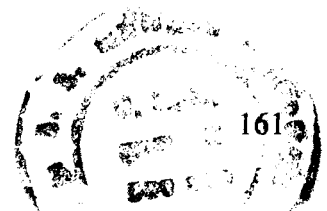
According to A.R. Sayed an inadvertent outcome of large scale male migration is the relaxation of purdah among Jamaati women in Ratnagiri as women are forced into roles and responsibilities held previously by men.

The main occupation of Konkanis is agriculture, followed by animal husbandry. The heart of Konkan Ratnagiri district is generally hilly, with several creeks. Due to this it is very difficult to cultivate in this region, though rice is grown whenever possible. The district is the home of the Alphonso variety of mango, renowned and exported worldwide. Harvesting and marketing mangoes is a seasonal business. There is plenty of sea food such as shrimps, prawns and a variety of fish. Agriculture Land Act 1956, giving the tiller the right of the land ownership deprived some Konkani Muslim of some privileges relating to rice cultivation. But on the whole, the region remains undeveloped and its natural resources yet to be exploited. So many families of

Konkanis were settled down in Bombay and Thane. Konkani Muslims have sought careers beyond the country's shore in significant numbers. Several Konkanis found jobs or business in the oil rich Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, East Africa, South Africa, Britain, North America, South East Asia and Australia (According to the Report of Konkani World Muslim Federation). The existence of Konkani Muslim club, in Nairobi, Kenya and in London, shows an emerging Diaspora.

A Review of Literature on the Konkani Muslims beyond the scattered and occasional references to the Konkani Muslims. Konkanis in Sociological or Anthropological literature. Indian sociologist Victor S. D'souza, author of the 'The Navayats of Kanara' informed us that he had made a detailed field study of the cultural traits of Nawayath of the Deccan and the Konkani Muslims too, though it appears to have remained unpublished. The late Prof. A.R. Sayed (1931-89) conducted research entitled "Muslims of Konkani women". Some years (1989-94) later Muhi-al-Din Mumin received a grant from the Indian council of Historical Research to Study the Konkani Muslim Communities in the medieval period. However, I have not been able to see it as a published work. A.R. Momin did a comparative study of the social mobility among Muslims in Bhiwandi comparing the Konkanis and the weavers called Momins so far as I have been able to locate, no other studies of the Konkani Muslims are available, despite some published materials dispersed in various writings.

The Muslim communities of the Konkanis have survived thirteen hundred years in India. As the oldest surviving Muslim community, their history is truly fascinating. The expansion of communication network leading to ease, frequency and decreasing cost of travel led to greater socialization between and among various sub-groups of the Konkani Muslims. Spread of modern education universally tends to level the ground between various groups, and the Konkanis are no exception. The leveling of ground is greatly aided by accelerating Islamization. Sea faring commerce demands exchange of capital and enterprise among peoples of different races, religions and cultures. This probably explains why, despite the advent of foreign immigrants – Persians, Arabs, Jews, Christians of various denominations and the parsis in the coastal areas of Gujarat, Konkan and Malabar. The local societies did not undergo ethno-religious strife. Trade in goods and services involve exchange, unlike extraction of revenues by the force of arms. Thus, trade contributed to the harmonious relations between the Muslims and the local communities of India.<sup>87</sup>



## **SUNNI BOHRA OR VOHRA**

Bohra or Vohra literary meaning of these two words is same that is “traders”. In Gujarat, Surat and Bahruch district, we can see the another Sunni Muslim Community that is Sunni Bohra or Vora Patel.<sup>88</sup>

“As per the origin is concerned according to the book Qlaidul-Aawahir-Fi Ahwal-ul-Bohra when the beliefs of Mehadawis or Mehadawi Mazahab was rejected or totally dismissed by the sultan of Egypt. Sultan Salahuddin Ayyub. Many of the followers of Ismailiyya migrated to Yemon and from Yemon they arrived at the coast of India i.e. Gujarat and spread in Deccan, Malwa, Konkan and Rajputana and were famous by the name of Bohara in this region. The main occupation of Bohra is trade so they were called as Bohras. Due to their trade links with Arab countries since from the olden days, they lived prosperous life.”<sup>89</sup>

According to Majalis-ul-Momineen “Bohara converted to Islam in 14<sup>th</sup> century with the influence of the teachings of Islam by Mulla Ali (RA). The shrine of Mulla Ali very famous in khambayat.”<sup>90</sup>

“In another book they were also described as Bohre who are basically Hindus and converted to Islam and also followed some customs of Hindus”<sup>91</sup>

“In some other book called the Bohre as Bhat and the king Ahmed Shah Abdali converted some Mahajans and Brahmanas to Muslim. After the converting to Islam they were called as Bohras”.<sup>92</sup>

The existence of Bohra community is in the Gujarat only and they were basically Hindus and were converted to Islam and they came from the Sindh region".<sup>93</sup>

In another book Bohara are the basically Hindu converted Muslims, also to mention the names of two preachers (1) Abdullah, (2) Ahmed, who were from Yemon and they arrived in this coast of Khambayat at the time of Raja Jai Singh (Gujarat). With the influence of Abdullah the Prime Minister of the Raja Jai Singh, Bihari Mal (Satpal) was converted his religion from Hindu to Islam.<sup>94</sup>

During the reign of Mehamood Begada 1459 to 1511 A.D. in Gujarat Bohra Jamaat is converted to Islam and Islam spread during 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>95</sup>

The existence of Bohrasorth birth place of this community is Gujarat and they were converted to Muslims from Hindus and they came from Sindh region.<sup>96</sup>

According to the Journal of the Asiatic Society, a man by the name Yaqoob came to India from Egypt, because of his own disputes with his family he stayed at Khambayat. He spread Islam in Khambayat at 1137 AD and many people converted to Islam.<sup>97</sup>

Bohra community, after the conversion to Islam they started the trade link with Arab country. On the basis of their occupation i.e. Byopar or Vyvohar in Indian language they were called as Bohras.<sup>98</sup>

Actually Bohras were converted Muslims from Hinduism and follows many practices and customs of Hindus like Diwali, Lakshmi Pooja, etc.<sup>99</sup>



## **SUNNI BOHRA**

Sunni Bohra are a Sunni Muslims community which is totally different from Dawoodi Bohras. Usually living in Sindh province Pakistan and Gujarat state of India. No doubt their religious beliefs is totally different with Dawoodi Bohras but they shared their cultural aspects with each others. The Sunni Bohra followed the Hanafi Fiqh. They speaks Gujarati. In Pakistan many families use their surname as Sunni Bohras. A small number of families uses the slightly different spelling of 'Vora' as their surname.

They are economically sound, many of them carry their business and activities through their own Karachi based association named Chardar Muslim Anjuman (Charotar being the name of the region in the Indian state of Gujarat where their ancestors originally come from).

Bohras are originally traders but many Sunni Bohras are well educated professionals with a large number of engineers, doctors, bankers.

They lived in Gujarat, Ahmedabad and Surat and also in Mumbai.

After independence, some of the members of the community migrated to Pakistan, and some lived in India. In late Nineties many Sunni Bohras/Vohras or Vora migrated to the USA, Canada, Australia and the Gulf countries and in Chicago etc.

There are many Bohras organization founded to rule or govern the religious aspects like

1. Sunnat Jamaat Quam-E-Bewahir, Ahmedabad
2. Patni Sunnat Jamaat, Surat
3. Patni Sunni Jamaat Quam-E-Berahir, Himmatnagar
4. Charotar Muslim Anjuman, Karachi

After the conversion to Islam we can see that one more division or sect came out and they called themselves as Sunni Bohra.

Actually some Bohra or Vohra are Ismaili in faith (Shia). Some of them believes and practices customs were, no doubt similar with Sunni Muslims but most of the rituals and custom were followed by non Muslims. So the Dawoodi Bohra is the Ismaili in faith and Sunni Bohra practices is the pure Sunni Islamic faith.

In the reign of Feroz Shah Tughluq, Sultan Zafar was the head of the Gujarat province. During the period of sultan Zafar many Boharas or a group of Bohras converted their religion from Ismaili to Sunni Muslims.<sup>100</sup>

### **VORA PATEL**

In Surat and Bharuch districts we can see another Sunni community of Muslim called as Vohra Patel or Vora Patel. Originally they were from Gujarat, India. They belonging to the Patel family so they were called as Vora Patel or Vohra Patel.

Many of them settled in abroad in various countries like the Middle East, Europe, Australia and America.

Many Vohra families were settled in U.K. from Bharuch initially settled in the mill towns of Lancashire. They worked in many mills so primarily they settled in the towns of Blackburn, Bolton and Preston,

Dewsbury, Leicester and also in East London. In the early Eighties Vohras also began to migrate to North America, and found in Chicago, USA and in Toronto in Canada.

The Vohra families are not mingling with any other Muslim communities or indigenous community. They are known to marry within their own community and have their own cemeteries, community centres and mosques. Many of them came back to the Bharuch to settle after retirement. The new generation of the Vohras were the more religious than the previous.

There are many positive contributions to Vohras community from those who are living abroad. They sent money to their native places, but all the money is not properly used in the field of education or set up business, factories.

In Bharuch and Surat the family men move abroad as soon as they can.

The common dishes of Vohras include Kichry Kury and Dal Gosht (lentil with meat) and boiled rice.

Vohras have set up their own associations in their host countries for the welfare of their society.

In Pakistan also, the community uses the surname 'Vohra' who are commonly known as Sunni Vohras following the Hanafi Fiqh.<sup>101</sup>

## **MAPPILA**

The Muslims of Malbar can be divided into two sections (1) Nawaits and (2) is Mappila, or Moplahs. The Mappilas is a Muslim Community which is lined in North Kerala of India. The Mappila Muslims make up the largest community in Kerala 24, 70% of the population.<sup>102</sup>

The word Mappila is derived from ancient Tamil language / Malayalam during the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. Mappila in Tamil/Malayalam refers to son-in-law. The term later came to mean those who had converted to Islam, or any religion other than Hindu.<sup>103</sup>

According to Abdul Rehman a businessman in Hubli who is belonging to the Mappila community of Kerala but he came to Hubli for his business purpose and settle down permanently. While interacting with him, I came to know that the meaning of the word Mappila means “Maa-ke-pile” (means the childrens of the mother) again he clarified that. The contact of Arab with the coastal areas of India is long before the time and trade purpose, some Arabs lived in this coastal areas (Kerala) for some period and married the regional Muslim girls and again they returned to the Native country i.e. Arab leaving back wife and their children (family) here only. So the responsibility of the childrens fell on the shoulders of the mother, hence we can say that the head of the family was the mother so the peoples of this community were called as Mappila.

Mappilas were active during Indian independence, and the Moplahs revolt is also in history.<sup>104</sup>

“These communities came into existence through the large scale immigration of Arab Sailor and their families and left its permanent mark on the Muslim Mappilas. The community which arose in Malabar as a result of the contact of Arabs, is called the Mappilas. But as per Kerala is concerned the effect of Arabic immigration in Kerala should not be overestimated as compared to the local population, they were small in numbers comparatively with the natives of Keralas.

The Arab, Greek and Jewish contact with Malabar existed from at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. This contact became predominant in the past Roman period. Therefore the history of the Mappilas goes back to the pre-Islamic period. In the Gazetteer of Bombat presidency, Khan Bahadur Fazlullah Faridi, mentioned the settlement of the pre-Islamic Arabs in Chaul, Kalyan, Supara and Malabar coasts and Arab merchants moving along the coromandel coast on their way to China.<sup>105</sup>

“It was with the advent of Islam that the Arabs became a prominent cultural race in the world. The Arab merchants and Traders now became the carriers of the new religion and they propagated it wherever they went. When Islam spreads among the Arabs, the Arab traders brought it to Malabar during the time of the Prophet Muhammed (SAS).

Majority of historians accepted that the Islam was introduced by Arab traders and sailors, to the Coast of Malabar in 7<sup>th</sup> century.

In Malabar, the Mappilas may have been the first community to come to the folds of Islam, because they were more closely connected

with the Arabs than others. The number of natives embraced Islam, joining the Mappila community. Thus among the Mappilas, we find descendants of the pure Arabs, the descendants of Arabs through local women (the vast majority) and the converts from among non-Arabic locals"<sup>106</sup>

Arab merchants propagated their faith along the Malabar Coast. The community that came into existence through the marriage of local women to Arab sailors are known as the Mappilas or Moplahs. The Arabs believed to have come from many regions of present day Arabia notably from the Red Sea coastal areas and the Hadhramaut region the present day Yemen. The present day Mappilla Muslims are Shafi'i Muslims and the Muslims of coastal Karnataka. But also a large number of Traders and immigrants came from Basra, Damascus, Tunis and Egypt. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries they are known for their fight against Portuguese inquisition and conversion to Christianity of native people of Malabar coast. Portuguese atrocities at this time was ruthless resulting in entire coastal villages and population being wiped out and almost all Arab properties being destroyed. Ships containing trading goods were drowned along with this thousands of merchants and their families and anyone who was an Arab. The Portuguese did not show any mercy as they were just coming from Portugal were they successfully drove the Moors out and had intense hatred and jealousy carried along with them. All this resulted in the Arabs (Mappila) losing control of the spice trade it had dominated for more than thousand years as well as losing more than

half of its population in the hands of the enemy. The Portuguese were religiously intolerant and Mappilas were forced to convert to Christianity or else die. Egypt sent its navy for help but could not fight off an even larger and stronger Portuguese army. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Mappilas were known for active armed attacks against the British, including the 1921 Moplah rebellion where more than 10,000 Mappilas lost their lives and a further 6,00,000 taken as prisoners mostly to Port Blair. Mohammed Haji was proclaimed the Caliph of the Moplah Khilafat (Caliphate) and flags of Islamic Caliphate were flown. Ernad and Valluvanad were declared Khalifat kingdoms.

In recent years, many Kerala Muslims, along with other Malayali communities have found work in the Middle East (especially in Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates), sending remittances home to support their families in Kerala. This makes Kerala one of the main contributors of foreign exchange to Indian economy.

Like the Bearys of Tulunadu, most Mappila Muslims follow the Shafi'i school of Muslim Jurisprudence (in contrast to the Hanafi schools followed by most South Asian Muslims). The Pakistan Movement (which drew its strongest support from Muslims in northern India) received a lukewarm reception amongst Muslims in Kerala though relatively few Mappilas migrated to Pakistan following partition.

According to the 2001 census, about one-quarter of Kerala's population (or 7,863,842 people) were Muslims. And some have

settled in other states within India. There are substantial numbers of Mappilas in nearby Koçagu (Coorg), Mangalore, Bangalore, Coimbatore) etc. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of Mappilas have left Kerala to seek employment in the Middle East numbering between 3 and 4 million people. Many of the prominent business people in these countries like the founder of Galfar which is based in Oman is Mohammed Ali and also K. Yusuf Ali founder of Lulu Group of companies based in Abu Dhabi are both Mappilas. They are just a few to name.<sup>107</sup>

It is a popular form of social entertainment among the mappila community of Kerala, south India, prevalent all over, especially in the northern districts of Kannur, Calicut, and Malappuram. It is generally presented by females, numbering about fifteen including musicians, a day before a wedding. The bride, dressed in all finery, covered with gold ornaments, is the chief spectator; she sits on a peetam, around which the singing and dancing take place. While they sing, they clap their hands rhythmically and move around the bride using simple steps. Two or three girls begin the songs and the rest join the chorus.

Duff Muttu (also called Dubh Muttu) is an art form prevalent among Mappilas. The Duff is a percussion music instrument made of wood and ox skin. It is also called Thappitta. Participants play this and dance.

The call to prayer adhan is known as Baank in Kerala, possibly derived from Persian bang-e-namaz.





## **Mappilas of Tirunelveli**

Indian Muslims who followed Shafi'i from the coastal state of Kerala - which borders Tamil Nadu - were forced by Portuguese brutal attacks on their villages in the 16th century to flee into the rural interior. They began migrating to the villages near Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu. Many of the present-day Tirunelveli Muslims claim to be descended from the Kerala Mappilas and follow Malabari religious teachers and social culture.

The Madrasa of Islamic knowledge is run by Mappilas and follow the Shafi Madhab. The childrens used the Duff Mutty during the celebration of Eid-E-Milad. We can see this in Hubli during the procession of Eid-E-Milad by children.

While taking an interview on the Mappila community the wife of the Rafiuddin says about the food habits, culture and dressings.

Usually the Mappila families use fish or sea food as their basic food along with the rice (boiled rice), chicken, mutton and sometime vegetables also. They rarely used the Chapati (or wheat).

They used all the ornaments of Gold or Silver as per their position, but they do not use nose pin or nosering and the anklets because it is not lawful in Safi Madhab.

Womens usually dressed the Sari or Salwar Kamis with full Hijab (or Pardah, Burkah) and men use the white shirt or Jubba and white Lungi. Although all the men even non-muslims also wear lungi, but we can differentiate Muslims easily with the style of wearing the

lungi. The Muslims wear lungi and opened the last corner in right side and non-Muslim opened the last corner (or side) is left side.

The Muslims of Malabar is divided in to two division or sect, they are (1) Nait and (2) Mappila. After the migration of Arabs to India, they settled in different coastal area of Karnataka and slowly they started mingling with the other regional people and learnt the language. Soon after they were able to spread Islam in their living area. After converting to Islam from the other religion they developed the matrimonial relationship. Many of them developed the concubage system with the converted ladies i.e. called in Arabic (kaneez). On the basis of this, the Mappilas were considered as the childrens of these ladies, means the father was from Arabic race and mother was from Indian race. Hence, Mapillas are the mixture of the two great races. Further culture got mixed with the other culture, in other words i.e. Arabic culture hailed on Indian land. Besides, the mother tongue is Malyali of all the Mappilas. We can see the interest and love with the Arabic studies or we can say that the studies of religious knowledge. They were hard workers and loyal. The basic occupation of this community is either trade or agriculture. Now they are ready to compete for academic studies unlike the others.<sup>108</sup>

Tarique-E-Malabar in this book, the writer mention about the Mappilas as the Mahapilla, this word probably was corrupted as the Mappila. According to him Maha means 'great' or big one, this title is given to the Arab traders for their excellency and the childrens of

these traders are called the Pilla means son (when the two words are coined it becomes “mahapilla”).

According to the Historian, Loius Mone “Mapila means newly married (Navshah in Arabic) or son-in-law. When the Arab traders came to India and married the daughter of the regional communities with due honour they were called as Mapila and this continued forever (History of South India).

In another book ‘History of Madurai’ it’s mentioned about the Mappilas that the Kalan community of Madurai was the first community who gave the name for the Arabs as Mahapilla, because the Arab traders married the girls of this community for the first time in India, than the other communities of India.

In Indian Antiquities, Mappila means Son-in-law who got married with the daughters of the kings, with respect they were called as Mopila Sab.<sup>109</sup>

According to the Historian DEY write in his book “Meaning of Mappila as Ma – means in Arabic mother and pilla means the children. Arabs married the regional girls, in this regard it was stated as ‘maternal relation’.

Asiatic Research in this book the word Mahamak, Mahe is the corrupted pronunciation of the word Moka and the meaning of pills is the childrens. Moka means the latter or let behind. The Arabs left behind their childrens in India.<sup>110</sup>

In another book the meaning of Mappila is mentioned as Mapila is corrupted word as Muflah – meaning irrigation or agriculture as their basic occupation.

In all these statements we can get two major points (1) The meaning of Mapila, (2) Arab got married to the regional girls.

Even today the system of 'Ghar Jamai' prevails in Malabar region.<sup>111</sup>

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